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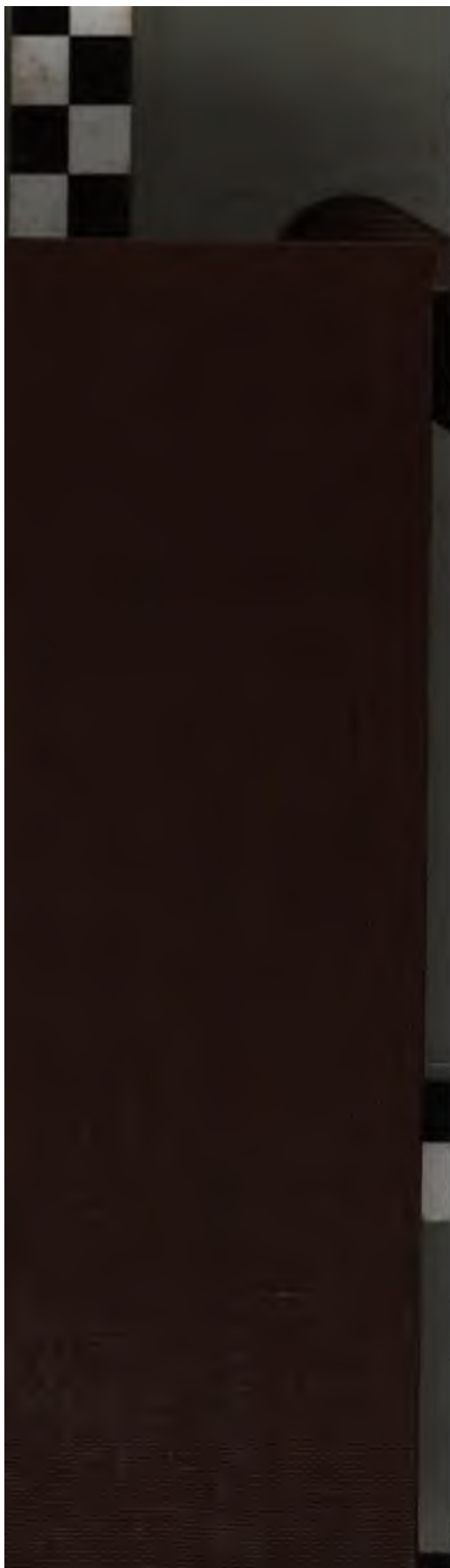
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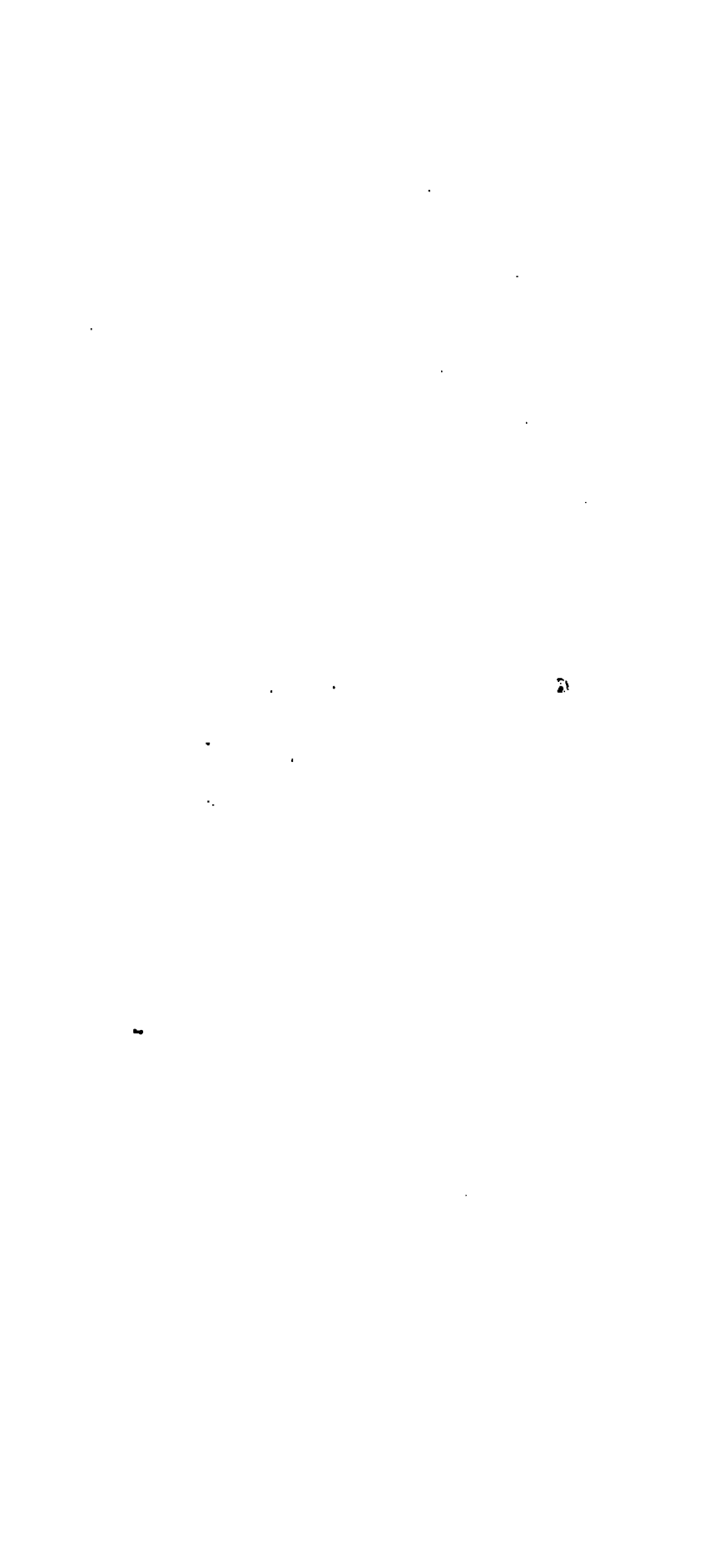
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By Martin Archer Shee
president of the
Royal Academy —

S. H. 1829.

O L D C O U



A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

**"By Taste and Fashion swayed, despotic leaders,
We're novel-writers all, or novel-readers.
The dull historian now no more prevails;
In vain the traveller tells his idle tales.
The poet's lyre no more attention meets;
The Muses may sing ballads in our streets.
What's now the rage for subjects gay or grave O?
---A novel, in three volumes, post octavo."**

Parnassus of Taste....Canto II.

VOL. I.

LONDON :

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1829.

685

THE HISTORY OF THE

REVOLUTION

OF THE

LONDON:

PRINTED BY HENRY DIGGENS, LEICESTER STREET,
LEICESTER SQUARE.

PREFACE.

THE writer of a novel, who, in the present day, expects to raise his head above the number of those who throng that department of literature, must have a very high opinion of his intellectual stature. The author of the following work, however, is so well aware that his faculties are only of the common size, that he often wonders at his own imprudence in not keeping out of the crowd.

Goldsmith, in the dedication of his "Traveller," doubts "what reception a poem may find, which has neither abuse, party, nor blank-verse to recommend it;"—the author of "Old-court," with humbler pretensions, has much more reason to distrust the success of a novel which is neither political nor religious—personal nor local; which portrays no public nor private character,—proscribes neither street, square, nor

district,—and has no claim to be considered historical, philosophical, or scientific.

In the following pages, the reader will find no mysterious intricacy of plot, no startling succession of romantic adventures, extraordinary characters, or wonderful events. The author enters into no rivalry with the great masters of the marvellous, and has attempted nothing more than a narrative of the ordinary occurrences of human life, interspersed with such reflections on the habits, manners, and morals of society, as his experience of the world has suggested to him.

In some passages which occur in the course of the work, the reader will observe that it was composed before the Catholic Question had ceased to be the all-engrossing topic of general discussion; and previous to the adoption of that great measure of policy and justice which affords us some ground to hope, that religious dissensions will at length cease to ring in our ears, and that the mild principles of Christianity will so far prevail amongst those who profess to worship the same Creator, as to influence their passions as well as their opinions, and be discoverable in their actions no less than in their creeds.



OLDCOURT.

INTRODUCTION.

“ I wish,” said Emily, laying down a volume of the last new publication she had received from the library, “ I wish, papa, you would write a novel.”

“ Nonsense ! ” good-humouredly ejaculated Mr. Oldcourt, the gentleman addressed, who sat in a musing position, drumming with one hand on the arm of his chair, “ nonsense, my dear Emily.”

“ Indeed, papa, I wish you would,” added Isabella, the younger sister ; “ I am sure you would

write a better novel than half of those which seem to be so generally admired."

"Nonsense, my dear Isabella," again rejoined Mr. Oldcourt, raising to his lips a tea-cup, which he had before partly relieved of its contents.

"For my part," said Frederick, Mr. Oldcourt's second son, a delicate, slim young man about twenty, "I wonder my father has resisted the temptation so long. Every body now writes novels; lords and commoners, fine ladies and fine gentlemen, philosophers, poets, and politicians. The parson pens a novel instead of a sermon, physicians write novels in preference to prescriptions, and the soldier lays down his sword to communicate his campaigns in a romance."

"Then I wish," said Emily, "that papa would follow the fashion for once; don't you, mamma?" addressing her mother, who was busily employed on a new pattern of fashionable net-work.

"Indeed, my dear," replied Mrs. Oldcourt, "I am sure your father's talents and knowledge of the world, qualify him to write a much better novel than——"

"A what!" cried Colonel Oldcourt, (the head

of an old Irish family, who had passed the greater part of his life abroad in the Austrian service,) taking off his spectacles, and raising his head from a newspaper, in which he had been devouring a debate on the Currency Question—"Write a novel, did you say? My brother write a novel! I trust he has too much sense to do any thing so absurd. You are a great deal too fond of those idle effusions, girls; you will derive no instruction from them, I assure you; and I wonder you can continue to find amusement in such flimsy and ephemeral productions. The land of literature is absolutely overrun with them."

"The market is rather overstocked, I must own," observed Mr. Oldcourt; "but I think, brother, you are too severe: a good novel is no bad thing, in my opinion; and if I do not try to write such a work, it is not because I have too much sense to do it, but rather, because I have not sense enough to do it well."

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed the young ladies, their mamma also adding the expostulatory ejaculation of, "My dear Mr. Oldcourt!"

"No," continued Mr. Oldcourt; "to write a

good novel requires a combination of talent, which I do not think I possess. I have not the art of weaving a well-connected story, nor imagination vigorous enough to conceive strong characters and striking incidents."

"Oh, Mr. Oldcourt!" exclaimed his good lady, "don't depreciate your talents, after the reputation you have obtained by your works."

"Indeed, mamma," cried Isabella, "let papa say what he will, he is considered a lion wherever he goes."

"And so," observed Colonel Oldcourt, "because your father is considered a lion, as in your fashionable jargon you express it, you would have him prove himself an ass, and risk the reputation he has gained by works of solid good sense in his own profession,* calculated to bene-

* Mr. Oldcourt was a lawyer, and one of the works here alluded to by the colonel was entitled, "Outlines of a New Code of Civil Jurisprudence;" in which it is proposed to make law an instrument of justice, and render redress attainable without ruin. The project, however, was declared by the highest judicial authorities to be wild and utopian, injurious to vested interests, a departure from the wisdom of our ancestors, and threatening in its result, the subversion of our glorious constitution in church and state.

fit society, in a paltry competition with scribblers, who can hope for no fame beyond the slip-slop celebrity of a quadrille-party, or a tea-table immortality of six months' continuance."

"Oh, uncle!" exclaimed Emily, "think of the author of 'Waverley;' is his fame confined to quadrille-parties and tea-tables?"

"A home-thrust, brother," cried Mr. Oldcourt, "Sir Walter will live as long as the English language shall endure. To what part of the civilized world has his fame not extended? Well may he say, in the words of the poet (if the ladies will excuse me for quoting Virgil),

'Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?'

If he had not raised for himself a nobler and more durable monument than brass or stone, he would well deserve one from his country."

"I suppose," rejoined the colonel sarcastically, "you would establish a niche for novelists in Westminster Abbey, to correspond with Poet's-corner; or place a brawny figure of your favour-

ite in company with the great colossus of literature, as the Gog and Magog of St. Paul's."

"In my opinion," replied Mr. Oldcourt, "the man who, like the author of 'Waverley,' has adorned his country by his genius, and supplied so rich a fund of innocent intellectual enjoyment, not only to the present age, but to posterity, is a benefactor to his species, and deserves as well to have his statue erected, as the statesman who guides his country by his counsels, or the hero who defends it by his sword."

"Well," said Colonel Oldcourt, "I acknowledge the author of 'Waverley' is the best of his class; but he is an extraordinary man, and no fair example of the species. He has made his own public; and if he still lives and triumphs in general renown, it is because he continues alternately to stimulate and feed the appetite which he has created. Let him but drop his pen for a few years, and we shall hear no more of his prose, than we now do of his poetry."

"In admitting," replied Mr. Oldcourt, "that he has created his own public, you allow him an influence, which only the highest powers of in-

telleet have ever been able to exercise in any country. He is truly a genius of the first order, who moulds the general mind to his own purposes—who sets his mark upon his age—who has strength and skill sufficient to turn the tide of taste into some new channel—who startles us by novel modes of merit—shakes our idolatry of the old models by the pleasure he affords us in the new; and completes his triumph by converting his admirers into his imitators. Well has it been said, ‘that next to the genius who improves the taste of his age, is the genius that perverts it.’”

“Trust me, then,” sneeringly rejoined the colonel, “our era will be distinguished above all others for the latter species of celebrity. We have great geniuses, exercising their powers of perversion through every department of literature, and in no department with more effect than in that of the novel.”

“Good gracious!” observed Mrs. Oldcourt, looking up with a gentle expression of surprise, and drawing her needle out of the row of network which she had just completed, “I am sure, colonel, novels were never more entertaining than

they are at present, or written with more attention to that delicacy and propriety, which should always characterize works intended for circulation among the respectable classes of society."

"My dear sister," replied the colonel, "what you call delicacy and propriety, I should be disposed to term affected refinement and mawkish common-place. What shall we find in the frivolous romance-mongers of the day, to stand a comparison with the life-breathing details of character and conversation which enrich the pages of Richardson, or the just and natural pictures of real life and manners which glow with a startling identity from the vigorous pencils of Fielding, Smollet, and Goldsmith. I am no advocate for their coarseness; that was the fault of their age: but some of our polished and popular novelists, who would not shock the refined ear by an indelicate expression, have much worse sins to answer for. Richardson, you will allow, is unexceptionable."

"But is he not painfully prosing and minute, uncle?" said Emily. "Papa undertook, last winter, to read out one of his works to the family-

circle, but we could not get through more than five of the ten volumes to which it is so laboriously spun out; we were all so tired of the buckram Sir Charles Grandison, and the ever sweet and sensible Miss Harriet Byron."

"I must confess," said Mr. Oldcourt, "though I think Richardson an admirable writer, and in his *conversations* unrivalled, yet I found the book rather heavy, and less amusing than my early impressions of it led me to expect."

"And you may remember, my dear," observed Mrs. Oldcourt, addressing her husband, "that by your recommendation, I was induced to read Fielding's 'Amelia,' as your *beau idéal* of a wife; but I found so much to object to generally in the work, and thought it so ill-adapted to delicate minds, that I have never allowed my girls to look into Fielding, or Smollet either, who I understand surpasses him in grossness."

"Then by Jove! mother," exclaimed Master Godfrey Oldcourt, a young gentleman rising fifteen, as the horse-dealers say, who had sat listening for some time, gracefully leaning on both elbows over his cup of tea, and occasionally sip-

ping it with his tea-spoon; "then by Jove, mother, they have a very great loss: I never was so delighted with a book in my life, as with 'Tom Jones' and 'Humphrey Clinker.'"

"What! Godfrey," sharply observed his uncle, "were you ever delighted in your life with any book?"

"I am sorry to say," rejoined Mrs. Oldcourt, with some apprehension of a lecture to Master Godfrey from his uncle, who had rather a tendency to indulge in that particular exercise of the faculty of speech, when a good opportunity occurred; "I am sorry to say, that Godfrey is not quite so fond of reading as his brothers, at least of reading for his improvement."

"I assure you, mother," said Frederick, laying down a pocket Horace, which he had been diligently perusing, "both Charles and I have read Fielding and Smollet, as well as Godfrey; and though I cannot recommend them to my sisters, I must confess, we found them highly entertaining."

"Think of Thwackum and Square, Frederick," now rejoined Godfrey with great glee, emboldened

by this timely reinforcement of his brother's sentiments, "and Squire Western, and black George, the gamekeeper!"

"My favourite character," said Frederick, "is Partridge. The hero, I must own, always struck me as a mere *roué*; somewhat vulgar, and very unprincipled."

"But what do you say to Humphrey Clinker?" exultingly asked Godfrey; "with my aunt Tabitha Bramble? Captain Lismahago; and then Peregrine Pickle, Commodore Trunnion, and Tom Bowling!"

"Aye! boys," now interposed the colonel, with a triumphant wave of the hand, and tapping his snuff-box preparatory to a pinch, "these are novels worth reading; full of wit, sense, nature, and knowledge of life: no pompous, pedantic, affected, philosophical rigmarol, about extravagant adventures and double-refined sentiments."

"The character of the novel," observed Mr. Oldcourt, "is certainly very much changed in the present day; but I think in many respects, it is improved."

“ Changed with a vengeance !” exclaimed the colonel : “ in the hands of the great masters whom I have mentioned, the novel was a faithful picture of the world and society ; representing natural characters and events in an impressive and interesting point of view : deducing precept from example, and displaying men and manners in all their varieties, with a force, truth, and tact, by which some useful knowledge of life is communicated, and we are instructed, as well as amused. But now, the novel is an unconnected jumble of *outré* characters and preposterous incidents : a kind of narrative hodge-podge, in which all the minutely-dissected sentimentalities of the French, are mixed up with the bug-a-boo sublimities of the German school. There is no longer any thing simple and natural in thought or expression. Characters are caricatured, actions overcharged, and passions exaggerated. All feelings are intense—all emotions agonizing—soul swelling, bosom heaving, and heart rending. In the fashionable compositions of the day, every thing is deep and disquisitional—rhapsody and rhodomontade—philosophy or farce. Their au-

thors endeavour to make amends for feebleness of thought, by a strut and swell of expression—their Bobadil words all swagger and look big, as they proceed in the puzzling maze of their grandiloquent lucubrations.”

“ Well, but, my dear brother! this is satire, not criticism; there may be some culprits who deserve your lash: but though I admit there is too much parade of fine writing, and too constant an effort to analyze emotions and dissect the human mind, as Doctor Spurzheim would give a demonstration of the brain, in the novels of the day, yet our best writers in this department are either wholly free from such vices, or if they do occasionally transgress, we overlook their defects in the merits which accompany them.”

“ What can you say,” resumed the colonel, “ in defence of that descriptive mania which rages universally through the modern novel? Page after page draws on, like a birthday newspaper, in a gorgeous man-milliner magnificence of dress, costume, and decoration; while the story halts at its most interesting period, and you are detained through a whole chapter,

till the author has displayed his entire stock of architectural and antiquarian erudition, in a dull detail of banquets, banners, and bowers, traceries, bastions, and battlements, with all their peculiar characteristics, heraldic, gothic, and arabesque."

"I grant," replied Mr. Oldcourt, "that in some of our best modern novels we occasionally find,

'That pure description holds the place of sense.'

The stores of description may indeed be termed the Balaam-box of the novelist, to which he has recourse whenever he labours under a lack of incident, or wants to eke out a chapter without any other available materials at hand."

"Well, but papa," said Emily, "think of the beautiful descriptions which Mrs. Radcliffe has given us. Who would wish to exclude the glowing pictures of romantic scenery in the 'Mysteries of Udolpho,' or the identifying details of person, place, and circumstance, in 'Kenilworth' or 'Rob Roy?'"

"My dear Emily," rejoined her uncle, "you ladies, with characteristic taste, are partial to de-

coration, and delight in the author who flaunts in all the flowers and feathers of literature."

"Nay, my dear colonel," said Mrs. Oldcourt, "you are too severe upon us: a taste for the ornamental does not necessarily preclude a just estimate of the useful; and sense and truth are surely not the less impressive for being agreeably adorned."

"Truth, my dear sister," rejoined the colonel, "is like beauty,

‘When unadorned, adorned the most.’

"And like beauty," added Mrs. Oldcourt, "it should be attended by the Graces."

"Well observed, my dear," interposed Mr. Oldcourt, pleased with the point of his wife's rejoinder, "my brother is hit by a rebound of his own shot."

"It is no disgrace to a soldier," said the colonel, gallantly bowing to his fair opponent, "to have his position turned by a lady. But to return to the charge; we must, in this instance, distinguish between a decoration and an incumbrance. When the little truth and common sense that are to be found in a modern novel are clouded and ob-

scured by dull, vague, and vapoury description—when, in the full career of the story, you are arrested through half-a-dozen pages, and required to attend to the graceful waving of the larch and the pine—to listen to the ‘mellifluous music of the umbrageous grove,’ and ‘contemplate the glorious orb of day in his refulgent course, gilding the distant mountain, and glowing on the neighbouring lake,’ I confess I lose all patience with such impertinent interruptions, such mere book-making expedients, which, as the hackneyed common-places of vulgar story-tellers, should be reserved to delight the nursery in some new edition of ‘Blue Beard,’ or ‘Jack the Giant-Killer.’ ‘Foregad! if I were licenser of the press to Messrs. Colburn and Murray, I would have no mercy on the larch and the laburnam; no ‘mouldering battlement’ or ‘ivy-mantled tower’ should stand; there should be neither morning nor evening in the chronology of a novel, and I would blot out the sun, moon, and stars, from the literary firmament, as tending only to lead the story astray, and delude wandering scribblers from the paths of common sense.”

“ It must be acknowledged,” said Mr. Oldcourt, that the ordinary phenomena of nature are much too lavishly employed in this way ; and we certainly have had quite enough of literary landscapes, depicted under all the sublime effects of sun and shade, under every modification of glare and gloom. There is no new mode of gilding clouds, castles, or mountains ; and, I own, I should not readily tolerate a regular sunrise from the pen of even our great novelist himself, unless it were drawn from the Peak of Teneriffe, or the highest point of the Andes.”

“ Brydone,” said Frederick, “ has anticipated him in that from the summit of Etna, though many have asserted his work to be a fancy-piece.”

“ The dazzling eye of Nature,” exclaimed Col. Oldcourt, “ when through the lids of darkness it first glances on the morning world, may be represented with some success on canvass by the pencil of a Claude, or a Turner ; but he is a coxcomb who imagines that with his pen he can, by any accumulation of high-sounding words and sentences, give even a faint idea of its magnificence, or pour the living lustre on the soul.”

“Why, uncle,” said Godfrey, turning round in his chair, “you are descriptive now yourself, and have given us a complete sunrise in miniature.”

“Godfrey!” exclaimed his mother, with an expressive nod of the head, evidently apprehensive of the effect of his interruption upon his uncle; but the colonel, not at all displeased with Godfrey’s remark, continued—‘as for the paly moon,’ we have long been sick of that in poetry; but when ‘the Queen of Night ascends her ebon car,’ in prose, it is past all endurance, and the scribbler should be put under restraint.”

“Well, uncle, notwithstanding the severity of your censures,” observed Emily, “I am sure you have been often entertained by some of our modern novels; you praised highly the lazarus-house scene in ‘Anastasius,’ and I saw you wipe your eyes frequently while reading the affecting account of the loss of his child.”

“Yes, and don’t you remember, Emily,” said Godfrey, “how displeased my uncle was, when the last volume of ‘Brambletye House’ was sent away before he had read it.”

“Godfrey!” now more emphatically exclaimed

Mrs. Oldcourt, looking at him with as minacious a contraction of the brow as her generally placid forehead could assume.

“When I begin a book, young gentleman,” said his uncle, turning rather sharply on his loquacious nephew, “I like to finish it: a practice, which I believe, Mr. Malapert, your wisdom has not yet thought fit to adopt.”

“Besides, my dear Emily,” addressing his niece, “I do not mean to say that I have not been sometimes amused by those productions, and even greatly pleased with passages, when I could not approve of the whole work.”

“Your uncle, my dear Emily,” said her father, “is too good a judge of these matters, and has too much taste and candour, to deny the merits of those distinguished writers who, in our day, have rendered the novel the most popular, if not the most powerful instrument of literary influence.”

“But I accuse them of abusing their powers,” eagerly rejoined his brother; “of perverting the public taste, and pampering the general appetite with the unsubstantial quackeries of a distempered imagination, till it can no longer relish the whole-

some fare of sense and science. The manly, the rational, the legitimate race of novels is extinct, and a piebald species, half black, half white—a mongrel breed, half history, half romance—compounded of fact and fiction—faithful to the character of neither, and confounding the properties of both, has succeeded in its place, deranging the established limits of regular composition, and encroaching on every other province of literature.”

“Nay, brother,” answered Mr. Oldcourt, with some earnestness; “let us do justice to the new school as well as the old. If the modern novel be in some respects open to your censure, it has also qualities which claim your admiration. Consider its general superiority in all the graces of style—in delicacy of sentiment and expression—its impressive pictures of passion, and rich diversities of character—its appropriate details of costume and country—identifying time and place—the wit and spirit of its dialogue—its great dramatic force, and picturesque effect. Nay, some of our novelists have aimed at higher objects, and endeavoured to illustrate important moral and political principles in their works.”

“ Yes, and religious principles too,” added Isabella ; “ as for instance in the book which I have now in my hand, ‘ Tremaine.’ ”

“ And there is ‘ Cœlebs in Search of a Wife,’ ” added Emily ; “ and the delightful melange of spirit, pleasantry, and patriotism, to be found in the productions of Miss Edgeworth and Lady Morgan.”

“ Why don’t you add Caleb Williams, and Hugh Trevor to the list, my dear girls,” drily observed their uncle. “ Why, this most absurd ambition, this insidious endeavour to make such productions an engine of deep philosophical influence and political effect, is the most flagrant offence of the modern novel.

“ The novel is now a sort of literary ambushade, into which you fall without being in the least aware of your danger. The philosopher lurks there where you least expect to find him ; the politician lies *perdu* in every paragraph ; and the sly polemic, in full controversial vigour, pounces upon your opinions at every turn of the page. A fine lady, lounging on her sofa, little imagines how she may be seduced into science, or trepanned into political economy, while innocently seeking en-

tertainment in a chapter of fashionable chit-chat; and she would be cautious how she ventured upon such works, if she were aware that a course of Colburn and Co. might make her as blue as the ladies of the Royal Institution.

“The modern novelist is, indeed, a would-be Machiavel in his way; his apparent, is rarely his real object: however superficial his work may seem, his design is profound; and while you think he is only administering to your amusement, he is opening a masked-battery upon all the prejudices of his age. Like the American rifleman of the Back Settlements, he levels point blank at your morals, your politics, and your religion, from behind every tree and bush in the wild waste of fiction into which, under false pretences, he has allured you; and if your principles escape without a wound, it is not owing to the defect of his aim, but to the weakness of his ammunition.”

“But, my dear brother, let me understand you,” interposed Mr. Oldcourt, drawing his chair a little more in front of his opponent, as if preparing for closer engagement: “you overpower me by your figurative impetuosity; but do you mean to say

that the novel is not a proper vehicle for the inculcation of moral and religious principles?"

"My good sir," somewhat sharply rejoined the colonel, a form of address which he generally used when he did not exactly like the way in which a question was put by his adversary: "my good sir, I do not mean to say any such thing; nor can I conceive from what observation of mine you have been led to infer such an opinion. Does it follow, because I condemn those designing scribblers, who use the novel only as a means of disseminating the most absurd and dangerous doctrines, that I must, therefore, consider that species of composition as insufficient for any good purpose, however ably and judiciously employed?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Oldcourt; "and I am sure you will agree with me, that it is not only the privilege, but the duty of every writer, whether in verse or prose, from the dignified historian and the epic poet, down to the party pamphleteer and the artificer of sonnets and charades, to keep the good of society in view, and

endeavour to render his works subservient to the great end of human improvement."

"True," observed the colonel; "but I contend that each writer will best effect his object, by preserving the appropriate character of his work, and operating within its recognised limits. Though the novelist may instruct, his business is to amuse us: a moral effect should be the certain result, but not the ostensible object of his labours. His part is, to play the entertaining companion on an excursion of pleasure; not the pedantic schoolmaster, in a holyday walk with his pupils, lecturing the whole road.

"The novel now usurps the whole agency of literature. It is the favourite tool with which the intellect of the day seems disposed to work; the fashionable channel through which all sorts of systems, opinions, and principles, are poured out upon the public mind.

"If a would-be philosopher wishes to re-cast in a new form, the materials of human society, and relieve the oppressed citizen from the troublesome restraints of law and religion, he writes

a novel ; adapts his observations to the development of his views, demonstrates that our best feelings are only vulgar prejudices, and parades all the ills of life before us, in a series of absurd and insidious illustrations, till our ideas of right and wrong are confounded in a metaphysical maze, and vice and virtue are turned topsy-turvy in the general jumble. If a political quack would undermine the institutions of his country, and preach up democracy and discontent, he writes a novel ; depicts the injustice of aristocratic distinctions, the abuses of exclusive property, and the advantages of an Agrarian law. If a puritanical enthusiast would substitute mysticism for religion, and scare away, with the scowl of austerity, all the innocent enjoyments of life, he writes a novel. If a party-tool would propagate religious animosity and national prejudice, to uphold an unprincipled faction in the plunder and degradation of his country, he writes a novel. If a retired official underling——”

“ My dear brother,” interrupted Mr. Oldcourt, “ I give up all this class of scribblers to your

utmost indignation ; I advocate only the genuine legitimate novel."

" Then," eagerly resumed the colonel, not easily diverted from a favourite topic, " we have novels national, local, and professional ; naval, military, and medical ; English, Irish, Scotch, and American : I dare say we shall soon have provincial and parochial novels ; every county will have its novelist as well as its historian : we shall have under-ground anecdotes of Cornish mines, tales of the potteries, and characteristic sketches of civil society amongst Lancashire looms and Lincolnshire cattle-feeders."

This last sally of the colonel's produced a general laugh.

" I wonder," said Frederick, " that in the rage for novelties, our writers have not yet made the tour of the police-offices : there is a rich harvest to be gleaned in that way. We might be gratified with annals of the Old Bailey, or the humours of the Mansion-House ; and Sir Richard Birnie himself might be made the hero of a magisterial romance, in a new series of ' The Chronicles of Bow Street.' "

“Ay,” cried the colonel, chuckling at the idea ; “and as every coterie is now occupied with the merits of some favourite felon, a Thurtell, a Burke, or an Abershaw, the public taste might be accommodated from that source, with characters of the sublimest guilt and most interesting atrocity.”

“By Jove! uncle,” said Godfrey, who had taken up the newspaper the colonel had been reading, “they have begun the harvest in that quarter already.” [*Reading.*] “This day is published, in three volumes, ‘Richmond, or Mornings in Bow Street.’”

“And what do you think of this,” said Frederick, reading over Godfrey’s shoulder :—“Literary Intelligence.”—“A correspondent informs us, that a late eminent physician has left behind him a valuable work in manuscript, which is shortly to be given to the public, under the title of ‘A Gastronomic Romance, for the amusement of peptic patients ; unfolding with much physiological pathos the affections of the stomach, interspersed with various visceral anecdotes, and divers details of indigestion.’”

“Bravo! Frederick,” said the colonel ; “I think I shall leave the cause in your hands.”

“O! Frederick!” cried Mrs. Oldcourt, “I thought we might depend upon you in this controversy.”

“My dear mother,” replied Frederick, “I look upon the novel to be a national blessing to all the children of leisure—an inexhaustible source of rational and refined amusement; and I only regret that its fascinations sometimes seduce me from more necessary studies.”

“That is what I complain of,” said the colonel; “nothing is read, nothing can be read now but novels; Shakspeare and Milton, Dryden, Pope, and Young, are all laid on the shelf, and will be as unknown as Chaucer himself to the rising generation.”

“I hope,” continued Frederick, “I shall always preserve my relish for those great writers; but my uncle will allow me to differ from him so far as to say, that I view with great interest the general struggle of talent in the novel department of literature. When I reflect on the number of pens that are at this moment busily employed for our amusement in all parts of the united kingdom—when I consider the number of persons of all

orders and degrees, that, fired by the author of 'Waverley,' now enter the lists of competition in the great arena of romance, I am delighted to witness a contention from which we have reason to expect so much advantage. I like those works too, in all their varieties, with the pictures of the manners and habits of other countries which they present to us. I would rather have an authentic novel from Nootka Sound, or a genuine Siberian 'sketch-book,' than a dozen royal quartos of wire-wove and hot-pressed pomposities, called Travels, with maps, charts, cuts, and other illustrations."

"History," observed Mr. Oldcourt, "has always been considered by those who were the most conversant with the affairs of nations, as a romance; and travellers we know are proverbially stigmatized as romancers; but a good novel is always true history in every thing that relates to morals, manners, and characters. To form a just estimate of the morality and civilization of a people, I would much rather consult their novels and romances, than their historians, their philosophers, or their politicians.

“ History presents to us (if I may so express myself,) an out-of-door, Sunday and holyday, state of society. On her dignified stage, events sweep along in majestic succession ; the characters of her drama strut and swell before us, like so many pageants in a public procession ; but we recognise them only by the place each occupies in the show, and the official costume with which he is invested for the occasion ; and when the master of the ceremony affects to raise the robe of state, and let us see the individual who wears it, what do we behold, but a Janus-like phantom of his own creation—a withered skeleton of character, clad in conjectures, contradictions, prejudices, and misrepresentations—exhibiting to the puzzled spectator, the hero and the saint on one side—the miscreant and the sinner on the other !

“ The novel, on the other hand, introduces us to an interior view of society ; shows us man, busied in his ordinary, every-day occupations ; makes us acquainted with individuals in all the interesting relations of fathers, husbands, and friends. We see them in the unconstrained familiarity of domestic life ; we judge of their morals, and their man-

ners, their prejudices, and their opinions; the peculiarities of the state of society which prevails amongst them, are illustrated before us in striking exemplifications of their public and private intercourse; and though we cannot assign the portraits which we behold, to any recognised personage, or discover in them a likeness to any given face, yet we are sure the features are all faithfully preserved, and we feel satisfied that we are familiar with the general physiognomy of the people and the age.

“How delighted should we be to possess such records of social life amongst the ancients, as the works of Richardson, Fielding, and Scott, supply, in illustration of the respective periods to which they refer! How eagerly do we explore the remains of the classic world, for those scattered traits of individual character and familiar intercourse, which seem to let us a little into the secret of their domestic arrangements—which bring us, in some degree, to a closer acquaintance with their personal peculiarities, and enable us to form some idea of the mode in which they ‘lived, moved, and had their being.’ Now, a good novel,

presenting such a faithful picture of society, as we almost every day see produced among ourselves, would do all this better than their most celebrated poets and historians ”

“ How I should like,” said Frederick, “ such an account of a debate in the Areopagus, as we have of a meeting of the Catholic Association in ‘ The Anglo Irish ;’—a description of a levee at the Court of Pericles, or a *soirée* at Aspasia’s, with Socrates holding forth to a circle of Athenian Blue Stockings !”

“ Only think, Frederick !” exclaimed Godfrey, “ of an Athenian ‘ Tom Jones,’ or a Roman ‘ Roderick Random !”

“ What a gratification,” continued Frederick, “ would it not be to ascertain the character of the ancients in domestic, as well as in public life ! To become acquainted with them, not only as citizens, but as men ;—to be admitted to their fire-sides—to be carried home, perhaps, to a family dinner by one of the Ephori ; or introduced to the choice spirits of the age at the *petits soupers* of Aristophanes !”

“ Or, perhaps,” added Godfrey, “ in a Spartan jollification, to enjoy ‘ the feast of reason and the

flow of soul,' over a Lacedemonian mess of black broth."

"My delight," said Isabella, "would be a Grecian or Roman 'Almack's,' describing their fashionable circles—showing us the daughters of Cornelia (for I suppose her sons were not her only jewels) dressing for a ball at the capitol, or driving to the theatre, to take a box for the benefit of Roscius the actor."

"Yes," added Emily; "or introducing us to the beaux, the belles, and the Blues of antiquity, in classic coteries and *conversazioni*, preserving for our inspection, a characteristic record of the fops, the fribbles, and the flirts of the ancient world."

The colonel, amused by the quaint combinations of the junior part of the family, confessed, that much satisfactory illustration of the state of society in our time, would be hereafter collected from the novels of the day.

"Yes," said Mr. Oldcourt; "between the labours of the portrait-painter, and those of the novelist, our faces and our follies will be equally well known to our descendants, and posterity will think they

have a personal acquaintance with the characters and manners of the present age."

"Then," observed Frederick, "consider the knowledge we derive from this source, of the people of other countries. What an agreeable accession to our literature are the American novels of Cooper! They show us Nature under a new aspect, and enrich our stores with varieties of human character before unknown."

"By Jove!" said Godfrey, "I seem to be as well acquainted with society in the Back Settlements, as if I had been a squatter myself. Think, Frederick, of Natty Bumppo, and the Trapper, and the Mohicans."

"The 'Tales of the O'Hara Family,' too," said Frederick, "and the 'Munster Festivals,' have raised the Irish novel to a rival interest with the Scotch."

"Washington Irving," said Mr. Oldcourt, "is the best of the transatlantic writers."

"Yes," said the colonel; "but he has so enriched his mind from our stores, that he is like the marauders of his country, and may be called a literary rifleman."

“ I am sure he is a sharp-shooter,” rejoined Frederick,” for he generally hits his mark.”

“ I wish of all things,” said Emily, “ he would give us an American novel ; his ‘ Wet Sunday,’ and ‘ The Stout Gentleman,’ struck me as evincing a pure taste in description, and an original cast of humour.”

“ His wing is for short flights in that way,” observed Mr. Oldcourt. “ Besides, his countrymen, except where they border on savage life, and blend with its peculiarities, are not what the painters call *good subjects*. They are not a picturesque people. The materials which they present to the novelist, are not sufficiently rich and diversified to tempt a man of Washington Irving’s evidently fastidious taste.”

“ Yet,” remarked Frederick, “ has he not given us in ‘ Salmagundi,’ some admirable sketches of character and manners ?”

“ Yes,” said the colonel, who had a military dislike of every thing American, “ but they are like the first settlers of the colonies, transported from this country.”

“ I am glad, however,” said Frederick, “ that

they have returned from transportation ; and I am sure they have not degenerated there, as De Pauw asserts every thing does in America."

"Notwithstanding their noble spirit of independence," resumed Mr. Oldcourt, "and the important part they now play on the great stage of the world, yet, society amongst the Americans does not appear to be characterized by those qualities which are calculated for striking effect : their pleasures and pursuits are not sufficiently diversified to admit of that exhaustless fluctuation of light and shade, which plays upon the ever-changing objects and occupations of older countries. The inhabitants of America may be said to be arranged in two great classes ; with few exceptions, they are all traders or agriculturists."

"Exceptions!" exclaimed the colonel, "there are no exceptions. Legislators, or lawyers, judges, soldiers, or priests, they are all tilling or trading : they may occasionally assume their professional designations, as they put on their best clothes on Sundays and holydays ; but in their every-day habits, you find them ploughing in their fields, or plodding in their counting-houses."

“The national aspect of society in America,” said Mr. Oldcourt, “is, I believe, not strongly marked, and has little variety of expression or character.”

“Character!” eagerly interrupted the colonel; “they have not character enough even for caricature. Mathews could make nothing of them; and after ringing the changes upon *guessing and gouging*, gave up Jonathan as a bad job.”

“Civilization,” said Mr. Oldcourt, “always proceeds slowly, where the territory is extensive, and the population consequently thin. Yet, one would expect, that as the American community has been made up from the different nations of Europe, their social combinations should display traits of character more peculiar, and habits of life more diversified.”

“Whatever clay you put into the American mould,” replied the colonel, “it always comes out with a cast of the Cherokee.”

“As a grand national pic-nic,” rejoined his brother, “to which all the countries of Europe have contributed, one wonders to find so little variety of fare.”

“ ’Tis a d—d cold collation,” cried the colonel, chuckling at his own wit, ‘spread out in a desert, where you feed in a scramble, which only hunger can enjoy, and want of accommodation excuse. But I hate the Americans--a cold, crafty, calculating race; suspended in tremulous equipoise between civilization and barbarism—an upstart people, too old for simplicity, and too new for refinement. Amongst them, mind presents the low, flat, unprofitable expanse of one of their own prairies, without an object of interest to adorn, or of association to endear it—no ennobling recollections—no venerable relics of other times—no inspiring memorials of power and fame.”

“ O! uncle,” exclaimed Frederick, with a little nervous glow upon his cheek, and in an eager but respectful tone of remonstrance; “is this justice to the country of Washington and Franklin? The land of liberty! where civil and religious freedom is not a wretched cant in the mouths of knaves and hypocrites, who triumph in its violation, but a fundamental principle acknowledged by all, and practised as well as professed?”

“ You speak like a boy, Frederick,” answered

his uncle, 'fresh from the classics, and full of their pompous declamations, in praise of that freedom which the ancients neither established nor understood.'"

"Then, sir," replied Frederick, "you must allow the Americans one merit, since they have achieved in their infancy, what the Greeks and Romans failed to effect in their maturity. They who establish freedom give the best proof that they understand it."

"Though many defects," observed Mr. Oldcourt, "may attach to the character and habits of our transatlantic brethren, which have resulted from their peculiar circumstances, they are a brave, intelligent, and moral people. As a nation, though they are but young, they have some unsullied glories to record—achievements of war and peace—in arms, in arts, and in literature. The genius of America early proved that he was of an heroic race: like Hercules, he showed his strength and courage in his infancy, and strangled the serpents, tyranny and intolerance, even in his cradle."

"Pish!" exclaimed Colonel Oldcourt, impa-

tiently turning himself in his chair, and plunging his finger and thumb deep into his snuff-box, as if, by a double portion of its contents, to refresh himself for a new assault upon the Yankees. Frederick, however, took advantage of the pause to throw in an observation. Addressing his father, as the quarter most favourable to his side of the argument, he said:—

“ Then, sir, as to the deficiency of the Americans in those memorials which indicate the antiquity of a people, and their want of those recollections which are associated with a nation’s renown in arts and arms, have they not, I may say, a common property in those of which we boast? If they have sought freedom beneath another sky, and subsistence from a different soil, they have carried the British mind along with them, and the rights they inherited from their forefathers, they have nobly asserted for themselves.

‘ *Cælum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.* ’

Though violence and oppression may have driven you from your house, have you not still an interest in the archives of your family—in the honour

and the achievements of your ancestors? Have you not as much right to glory in their genius and their virtue, as those of their descendants who have remained, and perhaps degenerated from both, on the spot where they were displayed?

“ An Anglo-American, as a descendant of the British stock, has a right to the renown of our Alfreds and our Edwards; and, though breathing in a different hemisphere, may fairly claim intellectual kindred with Shakspeare, with Milton, and with Pope, as long as he preserves the family character of a common language, a common liberty, and a congenial mind.”

Mr. Oldcourt was not a little pleased with the liberality, and what he thought the ingenuity of his son's argument; but Mrs. Oldcourt, anxious to divert the storm which seemed to be gathering on the colonel's brow, now looked at her watch, and hastily exclaimed, “ Good gracious, girls! how late it is! Frederick, my dear! we shall have hardly time to dress for Lady Millamie's ball.” Then laying aside her work, and bowing to the seniors, the good lady, followed by the

young people, withdrew to the labours of the toilet.

The field thus left to themselves, the colonel and his brother drew their chairs, and prepared for a regular set to, at close quarters, on the merits of the American revolution, which naturally led to the French revolution; but as the reader has *probably* heard those subjects discussed before, I shall not trouble him with all the good things that were said on both sides, about jacobins, and levellers, liberty and despotism, social order, and our holy religion. Suffice it to say, that the contest continued with unremitting energy, and varying success, until a late hour made it necessary for the parties to suspend hostilities in a drawn battle, and settle their differences as usual, however intemperately conducted, by a cordial shake of the hand, and "Good night."

CHAPTER II.

HAVING commenced proceedings in the foregoing chapter according to the most approved examples of spirited abruptness, and introduced the reader, *sans cérémonie*, to the fire-side circle and familiar conversation of the Oldcourt family, it may be expedient to state, that a memoir compiled from the archives of that ancient and respectable house, constitutes, with some collateral and connected details, the subject of the following pages.

Dr. Johnson, the ursa-major of the literary zodiac, seems to question the grace of an abrupt beginning. In a growl at Gray, the grandiloquent biographer declares, that whatever effect it is calculated to produce, may be easily attained by

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any scribbler who has ever heard the old song of Johnny Armstrong.

“Was there ever a man in all Scotland.”

But, however the critics may decide this matter, I confess I like, as Horace recommends, to rush “in medias res”—to plunge at once over head and ears into the very depths of a story; for, though you should be carried away by the current for a moment, you can always recover yourself with ease, and swim back gracefully to its source, whenever you think proper. Preparatory matter is generally very prosy and very dull; it lies like lumber in our way; we long to get over it and come to the point; to skip the preamble and see what are the provisions of the bill.

When a writer sets out formally, with the birth, parentage, and education of his characters, he troubles our attention with a number of unimportant details, before we can feel any interest in the parties to whom they relate. Besides, who shall now pretend, after Fielding, to take up his hero from the cradle, carry him through the nursery with decorum, and give an amusing grace

to his schoolboy pranks, and adolescent indiscretions? It requires a master-hand to deal with such materials.

The abrupt style is certainly the most convenient and spirited mode in which an author can (as the lawyers say) open his case to the reader. By this means, he ingeniously contrives to introduce a *continuation* of his narrative at its *commencement*; and, according to a figure of speech, commonly ascribed to the sons of Hibernia—begins in the middle of his work.

Indeed, the analogy between the legal and the literary process, when the latter is conducted in this way, seems remarkable. The hero of the bar, as well as the hero of the book, is generally *taken up*, in the midst of his career, under circumstances peculiarly calculated to excite our attention. The one is presented to the court, like the other to the public, as engaged in some striking adventure, or hazardous exploit; and when curiosity has been sufficiently aroused to the result of the position in which he is placed, the lawyer, like the narrator, dexterously reverts to such antecedent details of the life and actions of his principal cha-

racter, as may be necessary to elucidate the frequently mysterious nature of the transactions in which he has been concerned; then, by a similarly retrospective movement, we are in both instances led to that precise point of their history, at which the respective subjects of critical and criminal jurisprudence have been introduced to the reader, or the recorder—the press, or the Old Bailey.

Some sarcastic old bachelors have, indeed, insinuated, that the parallel might be carried still farther, and traced in the catastrophe, as well as the commencement of the two cases; for, as the hero of the tale, in the end, generally submits to the noose of Hymen, so, the hero of the trial frequently comes to his end by the knot of the hangman. But though Touchstone tells us, that “Marriage and hanging go by destiny,” the analogy here seems to be rather forced and fanciful.

The poet and the novelist have, certainly, in latitude of narration, some advantages over the historian and the biographer. The writer who undertakes to record the rise and progress of a state, must begin with its origin, however remote

or obscure; his first steps are taken through the wildest regions of barbarism, enveloped in the darkest mists of tradition. He must first exhibit the national bantling in the swaddling-clothes of ignorance and superstition—cutting its teeth upon its neighbours in convulsive struggles; trying to feel its feet in the go-cart of ambition, and developing, in a preparatory course of infantine outrage, the formidable organs of imperial desolation.

The biographer, too, must commence at least with the birth and boyhood of his subject: indeed, he generally considers it necessary to trace back the pedigree of his hero through a few generations, particularly, if by any genealogical ingenuity, he can press a peer, a judge, or a general into his service on the occasion. We have, thus, a good deal of preliminary panada to dispose of, before we come to the substantial fare, which we expect to find provided for us.

The poet, on the other hand, selects the time, the place, and circumstance, which he thinks most favourable to the introduction of his theme. Virgil, who is acknowledged by all critics as the most

judicious of bards, in the great work, which Pope, by an hyperbole that sounds very like a bull, tells us, is "to outlast *immortal* Rome," does not begin by exhibiting the pious Eneas in the nursery, with his coral and bells, in the arms of Creusa ; or with his hornbook in his hand conning the alphabet at Anchises's knee ; or rolling his hoop, or playing a match of cricket with the Master Priams on the plains of Troy : no, he takes him up at one of the most interesting periods of his career ; he catches him in the most picturesque tempest that ever set the elements in motion, when, surrounded by his companions, he sustains their spirits by his courage and prudence. The poet then lands his hero safe on the coast of Carthage, leads him to the court of the beautiful widowed queen, who receives him with the greatest favour and distinction, and to whom, *selon les règles* at that time, he immediately makes love, as the only return in his power for her kindness.

Thus, we see at once the important personage with whom we have to deal ; he is presented to us under all those aspects which are the most

likely to interest us in his fate—as a man of note, a man of courage, a man of fashion, and a man of gallantry ; and when the bard gracefully reverts to the earlier events of his hero's history, we are prepared to attend with eagerness to the minutest detail of circumstances in which he may have been concerned.

The novelist, too, sets out with similar advantages. He puts his best leg foremost, and proceeds on his course without thinking it necessary to tell you where he is going. As it may best suit his purpose, you are involved in some mysterious labyrinth, or perilous adventure, which startles you into attention, and you rush on, eager to arrive at the close or explanation, which is to disentangle the one, or account for the other.

Perhaps, you find yourself suddenly in the midst of a large circle at a ball, a coterie, or a *conversazione*, without the trouble of an introduction ; you feel yourself quite at home, and with all the ease imaginable, take part in the discourse of the various characters around you ; you attend to the flashes of their wit, or the effu-

sions of their folly. You are let into the secrets of the confidential, so far, as to think there is something to be discovered ; gleams of light break in upon you through colloquial openings, as to their passions and pursuits ; and when your curiosity is sufficiently excited with respect to the personages with whom you have become thus suddenly acquainted, the author takes you aside, tells you all about them, and contrives, by the recital, to increase your desire for further intercourse, and more familiar communication with them.

Having thus, as I conceive, sufficiently justified, by precept at least, if not by example, the adoption of what, with reference to its peculiar characteristic, may be termed the energetic, in contradiction to the systematic style of composition, I shall now, to use an appropriate figure of speech, *go back a little in my advances*, to lay before the reader some authentic particulars of a family which I shall designate by the name of the mansion which they inhabited, rather than the patronymic which they inherited from their Milesian progenitors.

Be it known, then, that the house of Oldcourt was a branch of an old and respectable stock, which had long flourished in the western part of the sister kingdom. From time immemorial, the ancestors of the present race had shared in the honours, and fulfilled the duties of the squirearchy, in the "Flanders of Connaught," as the most remote part of that province has been sometimes vulgarly termed.

It is pretty well known, though perhaps not to my reader, that the natives of this province pique themselves, like the Welsh in England, and the Highlanders in Scotland, on having a peculiar claim to be considered the representatives of the aboriginal inhabitants. Amongst them, Connaught is Ireland, *par eminence*. Where Irishmen are, there are most Irish; and they have a pride in preserving and displaying in their utmost purity, all those qualities which they think are, or *ought to be* characteristic of their country.

In no other part of Ireland could a gentleman be found more ready to feast his friend, or to fight with him; to kill him with coolness, or with kindness—by a bullet, or a bottle. In no other part

could you find gentlemen with warmer hearts, or hotter heads—who evinced a more punctilious attention to the laws of honour, or a less scrupulous observance of the laws of the land—who spent their money with less discretion, or spilled their wine with more liberality—who, in short, were better prepared for hospitality, or hostility—for love, or war.

The house of Oldcourt did not degenerate from the most heroic times, in the various modes of manifesting these Milesian virtues ; and the persons, as well as the property of the family, often suffered from the contentions and convivialities in which they were exercised.

Enough, however, of their ancient patrimony remained, to keep up their station in society, and to preserve the family mansion from dilapidation.

From the days when the renowned Blue Beard of the British monarchy signalized his piety and his morality by beheading his religion first, and his wives afterwards, the house of Oldcourt exhibited a stanch fidelity to the ancient creed of their country. They refused to travel the new

royal road to heaven, preferring the well-known track, "*Super antiquas vias,*" a perverseness which they continued to display through a long course of the most convincing violence and persuasive persecution. This conduct appeared the more extraordinary, as none of the family was ever considered particularly strict in his devotional duties. They were certainly by no means tight-laced in such matters; they had little taste for controversy; polemics, indeed, were the only kind of pugnacious exercise in which they seemed to take no pleasure, and to display no prowess. They never employed their leisure or their logic in disputing about dogmas, which, whether above reason, or beyond reason, would seem to be no very satisfactory topics for the exercise of that faculty. They evinced no theological turbulence; left transubstantiation and consubstantiation to fight it out, without once mingling in the fray; and could never be prevailed upon to trouble their heads about the little more or little less of credulity, for which pious Christians, Catholic, Protestant, and Presbyterian, Unitarian, Methodist, and Mug-

her court. They refused to travel the way

gletonian, have ever been ready to roast each other, both here and hereafter.

Perhaps, they considered a reform in religion, as some modern politicians consider a reform in Parliament, and resolved to oppose it until its advocates should agree in their own principles. However this may be, certain it is, that the Oldcourt family were not to be shaken in their attachment to popery, though suffering under the application of those cogent arguments above alluded to, and assured, on the high religious authority of an Act of Parliament, that its doctrines were idolatrous and damnable.

Some, however, suspected that their pertinacity in this matter resulted rather from a point of honour than of conscience, as they never argued on the subject ; but, influenced by that peculiar spirit of loyalty which has always characterized their countrymen, they evinced their attachment to their faith and their king the more ardently, in proportion at it was dangerous to display it.

The peculiar notions of a people, who prided themselves on the antiquity of their country and

their race, tended still farther to confirm them in their religious fidelity. They revered every thing that was ancient ; they liked old laws, old customs, old enmities, and old wine. The religion of yesterday had little chance of subverting the faith of ten centuries in the minds of those who traced their descent from Brian Borrhume, and their creed from St. Patrick. They disliked an upstart religion as much as an upstart family ; and thought a forcible change of dynasty as bad in the church as in the state.

Thus, Papists the Oldcourt family remained, in spite of all the pains and penalties which a holy zeal for the spread of a purified Christianity could suggest to the legislative promoters of peace and good will amongst men.

The privations, however, the mortifications and molestations to which they were subjected, had not so far broken down their spirit and their fortunes, but that they were still able to hold up their heads in the world with some credit. They still contrived to preserve much of the consequence and respect, which, among the true sons of the shamrock, have ever been, not only willingly, but

anxiously bestowed on all who have "good blood in their veins;" who are known to have descended from those who heard the harp of Erin in the halls of her heroes, and mingled with the magnates of Milesian times.

Though not intrusted with a commission of the peace, they had more influence in preserving it, than the obnoxious official who was selected for that purpose, and whose interference more frequently tended to exasperate than to allay the feelings by which it was endangered. Their authority amongst the "Boys of the barony," almost rivalled that of the parish priest himself; and the appearance of the squire in a fray of the factions around him, was nearly as effectual in repressing its fury, as if the reverend pacificator had exercised his horsewhip on the combatants.

The open, dignified, and resolute aspect with which the members of the house of Oldcourt repelled the insults of a domineering ascendancy, and the certainty that they shared, as well as sympathized, in the sufferings of their poorer neighbours, excited towards them, in a more than ordinary degree, the affection and attachment of the people;

and, regardless of consequences, a thousand shillings would have flourished round the heads of their enemies, at a word from any individual of the family.

The younger branches of the ancient stock were always favourites with the peasantry, and to say the truth, they generally deserved to be so. The young ladies were the "angel visitants" of every cabin within reach of their generosity and their jaunting-car. They were the prompt, and well-pleased dispensers of all those little comforts and kindnesses, by which the affluent, when they please, may so cheaply win the hearts of their dependants. They cheered the sick bed, and smiled on the cradle; while its little helpless tenant, in the language which nature has so powerfully directed to the female heart, seemed to chuckle its thanks for the attentions bestowed upon it.

They were, also, the ladies patronesses of every ball in the barn; when, at the periodical visits of the village Bowkit, he assembled the rustic *corps de ballet*, to stare at his white-stockings splendors, long quartered pumps, and "many twinkling feet."

On these occasions, the appointed *salle de*

danse was carefully swept clean; and if any portion of its ordinary agricultural contents was necessarily retained, it was neatly binned up in a corner, and screened from observation by the ingenious intervention of the winnowing sheet, or a combination of horse-cloths, disposed in a tasteful festoon.

Rude benches, three-legged stools, and straw hassocks, contributed from the neighbouring tenements, were ranged along the walls, for the chaperons and more sedate part of the company; and when the circle was graced by the presence of "*the family*," a few chairs were solicited from the mansion, and disposed in dignified seclusion at the head of the apartment, to accommodate the *quality*.

Then it was, that the blushing belles and sheepish beaux of the village, displayed their jumping agility in full perfection,—that they shuffled the brogue, and cut over the buckle, in jig, reel, and hornpipe, with emulous exertion

"To dance each other down."

But the exultation and gratification of the party

were complete, when one of the young ladies condescended to go down a country-dance with the bashful and embarrassed son of some favoured tenant.

The young gentlemen of the "family," too, were not less popular than the young ladies. They were, indeed, regarded by man, woman, and child, with an affectionate partiality which is hardly conceivable to those who have not observed the warm feelings and feudal attachments which influence the genuine Irish character.

The little half-naked urchins of the surrounding villages, started forward in troops whenever the young squires appeared, proud to do their bidding, and never so pleased as when they could present to them a hank of wild strawberries, or a wood-thrush's nest, with its unfledged tenants. But happy above all was he who was allowed to announce some interesting intelligence from the rabbit-warren, or indicate the newly discovered haunts of the badger, the hedgehog, and the otter.

The good woman, too, ran to her cabin-door to greet "their honours" as they passed, with her "Heaven's blessings on you, honeys!" "God

mark you to grace! and why wouldn't he? sure they are the true ould breed, body and bone, and I'll engage they'll keep it up bravely. None of your mushroom gentry, your spalpeens, who show the yallow clay; but the moral image of the ould squire himself."

As to the adults and active citizens of the vicinage, it is but justice to say, they were always ripe for *sport*; a term of great latitude in Milesian circles, which extends to operations rarely so characterized in other countries, and includes a fight, as well as a feast, or a foot-ball match.

In this particular use of the vulgar tongue, the heirs of the house of Oldcourt, through several generations, not only acquiesced, but seemed to illustrate its propriety in their common practice, as well as common parlance.

From the sympathy which existed, therefore, between the parties, they understood each other so well, that the juniors of the "family" had only to give the signal for a fray, or a frolic—for a scheme of mischief, or amusement—and the country, for miles around, was ready to rise in devoted alliance and cordial co-operation. Even

those whom age and infirmity rendered inadequate to active exertion, were eager to forward the fun, and ingenious in suggesting new tricks to torment the tithe-proctor, elude the hearth-money-man, and plague the gauger. Those functionaries, indeed, were not favourites with any class of society; but to the peasantry, they were particularly obnoxious, as coming into direct and offensive contact with their comforts and their feelings.

When, therefore, they could engage any of their young favourites in some well-concerted manoeuvres for their discomfiture, it was matter of high gratification; and the objects of their sportive persecution were lucky when the joke was not carried too far. But in all their pranks, or pursuits, Master Phil, Master Garret, or Master Barry, were leaders whom none could refuse to follow. They were the arbiters of fashion and of fame, through a circle of ten miles' diameter, and their sway was acknowledged at the fair, the horse-race, and the hurling-match.

CHAPTER III.

As in the present *voluminous* age, no work similar to this in which I am now engaged, or claiming to be considered a production of respectable dimensions, can be put forth from the press in less than three volumes octavo ; and as I begin to doubt, if my powers of amplification, even with the best intentions in the world, be, in the language of the fancy, up to the scratch, and competent to a literary exertion so long winded, I confess I am tempted to regret that I am so fully acquainted with the lives, characters, and transactions of the different personages with whom I have to deal.

It is surprising, how a little obscurity in these matters helps a writer on. When you are some-

what uncertain as to the facts of your case, you can call in supposition and conjecture to your aid; and they are fine malleable materials on the literary anvil. A great deal may be done by the judicious management even of a doubt. Nothing tends so much to make narration dry and laconic, as a too accurate knowledge of the circumstances which you have to relate. In this case, you have only to go on straight before you, in a kind of jog-trot, without turning to the right, or the left. You have no pretence for delay upon the road, and no business even to look over the hedge.

But when objects are seen through a picturesque mist; when you do not exactly know their bearings, and are only half-informed respecting their position and powers, you may proceed almost *ad libitum*. If you have a good seat in the saddle of a hypothesis, you may ride off in any direction, and canter on a conjecture through a whole chapter.

Here it is, that the historian and the biographer have undoubtedly the whip-hand of the poet and the novelist.

The historian generally finds in his subject all

the advantages of obscurity, uncertainty, and contrariety. How may he expatiate in the darkness visible which usually enshrouds the origin and infancy of states! The very name of a people, in the hands of a profound and ingenious writer, is fruitful of materials drawn from the very depths of erudition, etymological, chronological, and analogical.

In those periods, too, which are considered as within the limits of what is called authentic history, events appear to be by no means divested of that stimulating indistinctness—that happy controversial vagueness, so valuable to the historian of royal quarto pretensions. It is matter of no small difficulty to come at the real state of the case, in transactions of the most recent occurrence. Sir Walter Raleigh, while writing confidently the History of the World, was struck with the folly and presumption of his undertaking, when he found it impossible to ascertain the exact details of a disturbance which took place under his own window.

Even undisputed facts are presented under such a picturesque variety of aspects—their causes and

their consequences are traced through such an agreeable diversity of elucidation, that you cannot turn up the historic soil in any direction, without finding it rich in all the materials of amplification, and capable, under proper management, of being cultivated to the most exuberant literary luxuriance.

In short, when you consider the boundless stores of the historian—conjectural, controversial and disquisitional, it is clear, that a gentleman of some learning and leisure, with a good pen in his hand, and a ream of foolscap within his reach, must possess a more than ordinary degree of literary forbearance, if he abridge his lucubrations in this way, on any subject, to the moderate dimensions of six substantial quartos; nor can we be surprised, that our historic, swell like our law libraries, and that it is not only the occupation of a life to write a good history, but also to read it.

The biographer may, in his office, boast of similar advantages. He is seldom embarrassed by any deficiency of materials, unless, indeed, he should be unlucky enough to have a too accu-

rately circumstantial acquaintance with his subject. In such case, certainly, he is hemmed in rather inconveniently ; his imagination is imprisoned by his facts ; confined, as it were, within the rules, from which he cannot escape, but at the hazard of being brought up to the bar of criticism, to answer for a contempt of truth.

But when the biographer is not fettered by any restrictive certainties of this kind, he roams at large ; and the copiousness of his production is generally in proportion to the scantiness of his information. In short, the less he knows of his subject, the more he has to say about him.

This position may, perhaps, seem a little paradoxical, and might possibly admit of dispute, if it were not so clearly established in the works of some of the most distinguished biographers of modern times. Indeed, a slight consideration of the difference between the dry statement of a fact, and the diffusive developement of a conjecture, must place the point beyond controversy.

Suppose, for instance, you have unfortunately to treat of a subject within the range of accurate information ; a subject whose birth, parentage,

and education, are ascertained with the anti-speculative precision of a family bible, a parish register, or a college record.

How is the most discursive imagination to deal with the fancy-fettering brevity of such vulgar authorities? You are pinned down at once to time and place, and can no more flutter a feather of your wing than a stuffed magpie. You can only state, in humble phrase, that the highly-gifted individual whose memoir—or the distinguished character whose life—or the celebrated poet whose genius—or the renowned hero whose exploits you are about to record, was the first, fourth, or seventh son of Thomas and Lucy, or Geoffrey and Jude, and was born in London, or Dublin, or Edinburgh, or York, at such a house, in such a street, on such a day, at two o'clock in the morning. There is absolutely nothing more to be said, and every author of taste will feel, how little dignified, or impressive, must be such an introduction of a personage, who is afterwards to figure away through two volumes quarto.

Some writers, indeed, aware of this, as if to relieve a little the dullness of dry facts, and produce

something like a flourish of trumpets on the first entrance of their hero, have occasionally enlivened their pages with some entertaining touches of nursery narration, and cradle chronology, interspersed with interesting anecdotes of monthly nurses, caudle-cups, and accoucheurs.

Contrast the situation of a writer thus limited, with that of a biographer, whose subject has been removed by time, or distance, to that sublime state of obscurity in which you can see nothing, and may consequently imagine any thing; who, unfettered by ascertained facts, or acknowledged authorities, roams at large through the fertile regions of supposition and speculation. If the birth-place of his hero be unknown, or uncertain, he starts off in all the pomp of conjecture: if he cannot show where he was born, he shows where he *might* have been born, or where he *ought* to have been born.

He, perhaps, makes seven cities contend for the honour of his birth, as for the birth-place of the Mæonian bard. He indulges his reader with a brief sketch of each, discusses at learned length their several pretensions, and defeats conflicting

authorities by their own statements; then, finally summing up the whole with the dignity and discrimination of a judge, he, by a luminous array of argument and illustration, decides the point at issue, till some still more erudite biographer moves for a new trial, shows cause with success, and again unsettles the verdict.

Thus we see the advantage of not being too well informed on our subject. A very distinguished author has ingeniously observed,—“ That we do not write upon a subject because we understand it, but we understand it because we have written upon it.” This, however, is a result which may be sometimes doubtful, and which the learned author himself has not, perhaps, always verified.

The resources of the biographer, however, appear to be considerably extended, by a device which has been of late years very successfully employed; a device, by which every chasm in his materials may be effectually filled up; every lost link in the chain of authentic events may be satisfactorily supplied.

Thus, should you happen to be occupied upon a memoir of a great poet, (the life of Homer for example) respecting whom, neither history nor tradition has furnished you with any very satisfactory details; and suppose you wished to discover what Homer's conduct had been during the plague of Athens, or in any given instance, relative to which all ordinary research were vain; you would probably consider this rather a hopeless case—but no such thing. The biographer, by a judicious reference to the better ascertained proceedings of a later bard, inquires how Virgil conducted himself under similar circumstances, and the problem is solved at once; for, as they were both poets, it is evident, they must have acted alike in the same situation.

There appears to me, I confess, something exceedingly ingenious in thus, as it were, by a kind of mathematical process in biography, deducing the *unknown* from the *known*, making the great poets of one age in some measure answerable for those who have preceded them. It must, I conceive, have a salutary effect upon the con-

duct of the existing race of bards, to show how they may be made responsible for the characters of their poetical ancestors.

Mr. Moore had better mind what he is about ; and Messrs. Scott, Campbell, and Crabbe, would do well to reflect in time, that in their most unguarded moments, they may be unwittingly furnishing materials to some future biographer, for the lives of Milton, Dryden, and Pope.

By the foregoing statement, it is plain, that according to this ingenious process, you may proceed to treat your subject at any given length ; and in every conceivable circumstance of life and conduct, in which you can suppose him to be engaged.

As to his education, after you have discussed the previous question, whether he was educated at all—you proceed to inquire, whether publicly or privately. Here, a dissertation on the advantages, or disadvantages, of public and private education may be appropriately introduced, with anecdotes of Westminster, Eton, and Harrow Schools.

Next come the questions where, and how he was educated.

You are now led at once to the Universities; and a brief sketch of the rise, progress, and present state of these establishments will come in gracefully, with a smart comparative estimate of the different systems of instruction pursued at Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin.

It will not be amiss if you here, also, take an opportunity of reprobating the Metropolitan University, as degrading the dignity of letters, by opening the fountains of erudition to slake the vulgar thirst of muse-enamoured cits, and scientific shopkeepers.

After having thus dispatched the birth, parentage, and education of your hero, you proceed,—

“A swarm of subjects settling on your pen.”

And should you know nothing whatever of his subsequent career, that little deficiency makes no difference whatever; or rather, I should say, it makes a great difference in your favour, by leaving you at liberty to move in a wider sphere of ob-

ervation, and avail yourself of a much more exuberant stock of materials; for if there be no facts to limit their selection, or direct their application, it is evident, that whatever refers to things in general, must be here directly in point.

You take at once the era in which your hero lived; draw a luminous picture of its peculiarities and characteristics; describe its various establishments and institutions, political, religious, and military; elucidate its merits and its manners; its customs, its laws, and its literature; gracefully winding up the whole with a narrative, enumeration, or catalogue *raisonné*, of all the conspicuous characters who flourished at the same period.

And lest any common-place reader should be disposed to doubt what all this has to do with the matter in hand, you satisfy his scruples in a delicate tail-piece paragraph, by the assurance, that such were the associations and impressions which must have been presented to the mind, and must have contributed to form the character of the extraordinary personage of whom you know so little, and have written so much.

The example of some great works executed upon

this plan, has made it apparently very popular in the republic of letters ; and a general rummage is now going forward amongst ancient records, and musty manuscripts, in search of those subjects in which it can be rendered most available for the composition of that general compendium of useful and entertaining knowledge—that *omnium gatherum* of literature, which now goes by the name of biography.

I understand the reading-rooms of the British Museum, and all our public libraries, are crowded with literary ladies and gentlemen, eagerly exploring their moth-eaten memoranda, and black letter obscurities, in the hope of discovering in the twilight of time, some dark secluded spot, to which a ray of illustration might be directed ; some character of eclipsed celebrity, upon which a renovated radiance might be cast by contemporary, collateral, or conjectural elucidation ; and happy is the individual who can hit upon a subject of unauthenticated history, neglected biography, or inscrutable research.

But though there is much pleasure in contemplating the advantages to general literature, which

will necessarily result from the present enthusiastic devotion to these recondite studies, I must not allow myself to neglect the little affair in which I am myself at present engaged. I shall, therefore, now return to the concerns of the Oldcourt family, to which I promise to be all attention, at least in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

OF all the virtues which distinguish man in society, the virtue of hospitality is that which seems to be of the most doubtful character. It so easily, and so often slides into a vice, and is so frequently associated with habits which have but little claim to our respect, that we sometimes see reason to doubt the existence of the genuine quality, even amongst those who are thought to exercise it to its most lavish extent; and may justly consider them as actuated by a desire to indulge their own pleasures, rather than by a generous disposition to promote the enjoyments of others.

Now this I take to be a promising paragraph to set out with at the commencement of a chapter, and one from which the reader may be reason-

ably led to expect some pithy and sagacious observations.

Indeed, I feel myself going off, as it were, at a tangent, in the direction of what the periodicals of the day would call an *article*, on the subject. But I will not indulge myself in this erratic propensity, although I am satisfied I could, in the course of a few pages, correct some very erroneous notions which prevail in society respecting the much misunderstood virtue above alluded to.

I must, however, take the liberty of remarking, *en passant*, that hospitality, as far as it can reasonably be considered a virtue, is very rarely found in civilized life, and that it appears to be most rare amongst that class of society which usually compliments itself with the appellation of the "better orders."

"Hey-day!" cries some fine jolly fellow, in whose face you may read the history of some hogs-heads of Barnes's best claret, with an indignant hiccup after a bumper to the appropriate toast; 'May we never want a friend, or a bottle to give him.' "This is fine doctrine! what! shall I, who am allowed to have as well stocked a cellar as

any in England, a cellar that never changes its temperature from 65° Fáhrenheit, through the whole year ; shall I, who boast a cook who has taken the highest degree in the culinary college of the renowned Eustache Ude ; shall I, who give dinners that might tickle the palate of an Apicius, and who never sit down content without at least a dozen friends to assist me in devouring them ; shall I, who devote my time, my money, and my health, to the exercise of its rites, have no credit for my hospitality ?”

“ Certainly not, my good sir : you may attain to an appropriate celebrity in a new edition of the *Almanach des Gourmands* ; your gastronomic fame may resound in corporate halls, and excite the admiration of a court of aldermen, but to the *virtue* of hospitality you have no claim. You gratify your pride and your palate ; your dinners are displays of pomp and epicurism, at which no man who wants a dinner ever finds a seat, and to which, any man is invited who can return the treat, or contribute to the entertainment.”

“ What ! says the portly lord of the manor, the pompous knight of the shire, shall I, who

entertain the whole county twice a year, with turtle and venison, *Sillery and Château-Margot*; who keep open house for my hungry constituents, in town and country, feeding them with hopes and hot luncheons, with promises, and pie-crusts too; shall I not be considered as keeping up the character of the county, and representing its hospitalities as well as its interests?"

Quite as well, in many instances, I doubt not the reader will admit.

But "*conclusio non sequitur*," as we logicians say. Really the honourable gentleman has made out no case, he has laid no "parliamentary ground" for his pretensions. The worthy member might as well put in his claim to the virtue of hospitality, because, at the last election, he was convicted under the treating act.

No, no, gentlemen, it really will not do. It is not every man who eats and drinks upon a large scale, and collects his friends to assist in the operation, that can be justly called hospitable; neither is it he, who, fishing for the good things of this world, thinks it expedient to bait his hook with a good dinner.

Hospitality is not to be found amidst the orgies of pride or politics; she has no seat either at a civic feast, or a *fête champêtre*, and has long since been frozen to death, in that frigid zone of life, where the regular interchange of edible equivalents in dinner for dinner, and dish for dish, carries on the heartless commerce of fashionable company. Formerly, hospitality delighted to preside in the baronial hall,

“ Where still good cheer abounded, and a throng
“ Of vassals and dependants graced the board.”

Often, too, was she to be seen in the refectory of the convent, making the monks her almoners, to feed the poor, and succour the stranger on his way; “ *mais nous avons changé tout cela.*” New fashions prevail among the squirearchy and the hierarchy; and a pious divine of the present day has taken some pains to assure us, that he who cannot feed himself is afflicted with a disease which should be left to “ the remedy of nature;” the starving system I presume, than which, a more disagreeable and unpalatable process of cure has never been prescribed by the Faculty.

Now, here again, I find myself ready to *bolt*, as the jockies say, and run out of the course after that reverend gentleman, who, in devoting himself to the double duty of repressing popery and population, has, I have no doubt, rendered an equal service to church and state. But as I promised to be true to the Oldcourt family, at least in this chapter, I will not be tempted from my purpose.

If I am asked, then, where we are to look for hospitality, if we cannot recognise her in those abodes of pomp, luxury, and profusion, in which she is commonly supposed to dwell, I answer, you will find her in the hut of the savage, prompting him to the noblest exercise of her rites, in the suppression of his revenge when he receives his foe beneath his roof, and protects him there as in the sanctuary of his safety; you will find her in the mud-built cabin of the Irish peasant, when, opening his heart and his hovel to those who are still more destitute than himself, he cheerfully shares his scanty meal of potatoes, and his wretched bed of straw, with the wandering beggar and the wayworn stranger. You might

have found her also in the venerable mansion of the Oldcourt family, where she was well known to have long held her head-quarters, and from which she continued to diffuse her benefits to the whole district, until she was disturbed by the revels of one of the last possessors of the establishment, who profaned her rites by intemperance and profusion.

Hospitality, indeed, as far as that term is understood to mean the disposition to enforce on every one who comes near you that ancient, convivial maxim, "*to eat, drink, and be merry,*" may be considered as hereditary in an old Irish family; it is a kind of heir-loom that goes with the estate, and too often causes the estate to go likewise, a little faster than suits the interests of those who keep it up with too ardent a devotion.

In the house of Oldcourt, particularly, it was displayed in all its varieties, frequently in its most exalted form of virtue, and sometimes, I am sorry to say, in its degradation, as a vice. In every case, however, it co-operated effectually with certain other qualities, characteristic of the family, to fine down the unwieldy possessions of their ancestors,

to the more moderate and manageable limits, within which the property of the present race had been restricted.

The process of reduction, indeed, seemed to go on so rapidly during the wholesale hospitalities of Squire Daniel, the father of the two Messrs. Oldcourt, to whom the reader was introduced in the first chapter, that it was generally supposed, if he had lived a few years longer, the family estate would have been wasted to a skeleton. But an opportune fit of the gout interrupted the various operations in which he laboured so successfully to produce this result, and the ancient woods of Oldcourt, though somewhat shorn of their honors, still remained for the advantage of his successors.

Mr. Daniel Oldcourt had been distinguished for many qualities, which were highly esteemed by the convivial spirits of his day. He was, indeed, the *beau idéal* of a country squire at the period in which he flourished. In his youth he was renowned for his prowess in all athletic exercises. He was the best shot in the county, and would snuff a candle at any distance within the range of his barking irons. In short, he could

wing a friend, or a wild fowl, with equal precision. He was so brave, too, that he would fight any man for "looking crooked" at him; and take the most desperate leap that a steeple chace could offer without finching. He was the hardest drinking man of the hunt, for which he kept two packs of hounds; and was so hospitable, that he never had a guest at his table whom he did not endeavour to put under it.

He had wit enough to cut a joke at another's expense, and good humour enough to take a joke at his own. He was famed also for his generosity, but it was a generosity of a very peculiar character; he would give his money freely to any man, except to him who had a legal claim to it.

If you asked him for a debt, he would ask you to a dinner, and ply you with wine till you forgot your bill. He would not give you a guinea if he could help it, but you might go and live a month with him, and he would thank you for your company, spending more, perhaps, to entertain you than would satisfy your demand.

Still, influenced by the spirit of the old feudal

chief, what was insisted on as a right, he had a mortal aversion to concede ; what could not be legally recovered, he would sometimes inconvenience himself to pay. But he held it as a point of honour to resist all who had the law on their side : a feeling very prevalent, and not very extraordinary, amongst those who found, by experience, that the law existed not for their protection, but their oppression.

He was, indeed, a bold man who would attempt to execute a law process at the castle of Oldcourt. It was a service of some danger, even with the aid of a military force. The boys of the barony would not see the squire insulted on his own premises with impunity, and it was always an insult to take the law of an Irish gentleman.

The indignant chief could raise the *posse comitatus* much sooner than the sheriff, who, in Ireland, never finds that force on the side of authority. The magistrate, too, could not, by any official plea, extricate himself from a very awkward personal responsibility to a man whose hand was as steady as his spirit was undaunted ; and whose *cartel* was sanctioned by the preva-

lent customs of a people, amongst whom, the recreant who would refuse to give "the satisfaction of a gentleman," would hardly be allowed to shelter himself from contempt even under the lawn sleeves of a bishop.

Early in life, Squire Oldcourt had married the daughter of a gentleman of some fortune in a neighbouring county. The father of the young lady was what in the language of the country, at that time, was termed a kiln-dried Protestant; that is, not having the faith, or the firmness of the Oldcourt race, he found it prudent to conform externally to the established church.

His family, however, adhered openly to the proscribed creed. The attentions, therefore, of Mr. Oldcourt, were not unacceptable to the young lady, and the Catholic part of the family.

As the old gentleman, however, appeared to discourage them, the lover prevailed on his mistress to show at once her love and her agility, by leaping from a window into his arms; and having had immediate recourse to the nearest *couple beggar*, (a functionary who, in Ireland, answers to the blacksmith of Grétna Green) they returned,

after the honeymoon, to receive that paternal blessing, which some persons shrewdly supposed to have been withheld in the first instance, only lest it should be expected to be accompanied by a dower. The squire, however, was lucky in his choice, and he disregarded money too much to trouble his father-in-law on a subject, which to do the latter justice, he always took particular care to avoid.

Mrs. Oldcourt, through the course of many trying years, proved herself a mild, faithful, affectionate wife. Her sweetness and good temper preserved the affections, if they did not secure the fidelity of her husband. By degrees, she succeeded in weaning him from his out-door habits of dissipation ; and her care and good sense contributed, in some measure, to counteract the effects of his negligence and extravagance at home. Although she could not contract the scale of an establishment, where open house was the order of the day for some generations ; where all

“ Claimed *welcomes* still, and had their claim allowed ; ”

Yet, she introduced into her household something

like order and regularity; and repelled, by the dignity of her manners, the encroachments of those whose artifice, impudence, and profligacy, made them the most dangerous intruders.

Her husband was one of those very social people, who are never sociable in their own families; who, like Janus, show a double face, the one in public, the other in private; who are always gay and agreeable abroad, but gloomy and low-spirited at home.

Having no taste for literature, beyond the pages of the Racing Calender, and the County Chronicle, he had no resources in himself; and as he had no occupations but those of galloping after a fox, and showing his skill in the senseless massacre of hares, partridges, and woodcocks, so he had no enjoyments but in the noisy revelries of the board and the bottle, which, amongst kindred spirits, usually followed such exploits.

He could, in short, bear any company but his own, or that of his family: he had no domestic sympathies, no fire-side feelings. When the presence of strangers did not stimulate his vivacity, and he found himself reduced to what he consi-

dered the solitude of his own circle, he was always silent, or dissatisfied, or asleep ; so that to keep him at home, and prevent his making everybody there as uncomfortable as himself, his wife soon found it a point of good policy, to provide a succession of such guests as might gratify the convivial propensities of their host, without much impairing his respectability.

Such, indeed, was his hospitality (as it has been called), or rather I should say, his rage for what he called society, that he has been known, when he found the dinner hour approaching, without the hope of a guest, to take his station at his own gate, and press the first decent person that appeared "to take pot luck and crack a bottle with him."

His family consisted of three sons and one daughter, who received from an excellent mother all that vigilant care and anxious attention, which their father was too selfish and sensual to bestow upon them.

Yet, he was rather a negligent than an unkind parent ; he had no objection to the enjoyments of his children, unless they interfered with his

own; and when he thought of them at all, it was generally with sentiments of regard, though his affection had not energy enough to make him active in their interests.

He appeared to be proud of his daughter's beauty; but, as far as he was concerned, it might have been her sole dependence; for it never entered his head that it was any part of his duty to provide her either with a portion or an accomplishment: all he deemed necessary in the education of a woman, was to make her a good housekeeper and a good nurse.

Of his sons, the second was his favourite, because he seemed most to resemble himself, and showed more of what he called spirit than his brothers; that is, he was more intractable with his teachers, more quarrelsome among his companions, and more addicted, than they were, to all those mischievous and offensive pranks which pass, amongst country gentlemen, as undoubted indications of a quality highly esteemed in their circle, under the appellation of spunk.

His father used to relate, indeed, with no small exultation, as an early instance of this manly

attribute in Master Garret, how, at seven years old, he nearly knocked his mamma's eye out with a brick-bat, because she reproved him for twisting the neck of his bird.

Frequently, too, when the young gentlemen were introduced after dinner, and his favourite had swallowed a bumper at one breath, the squire would boast before him of the many glasses of wine he could toss off without making his eyes dance, clapping him at the same time on the back, with an exclamation of "There's a young hang dog for you;" an expression which was considered a panegyric by most of his guests, and which rarely failed to be followed by such encouraging commendations from them, as "That's my man!" "He'll do, I'll answer for it," "A chip of the old block, squire!" "He'll be no flincher, I'll warrant him."

A bacchanalian renown thus early obtained, was by no means an agreeable distinction for her son in the estimation of Mrs. Oldcourt, and she most anxiously laboured to counteract its influence, not only on the two boys who were lucky enough to deserve no share in it, but also on him

who was its object. Her good sense, judicious precepts, and affectionate vigilance, effectually succeeded with the eldest and the youngest son : indeed, from a very early period, they had evinced but little ambition for that species of celebrity which the squirearchy are qualified to bestow ; and even Master Garret was reported by the squire himself to be nearly spoiled by his mother, “ who tied him as well as the others to her apron strings.”

CHAPTER V.

Mrs. OLDCOURT, though gentle in her manners, and distinguished by all the delicacies of the female character, was a woman of masculine understanding. She had been brought up under a system, which, according to the good housewife habits of the time, had more reference to the dairy and the poultry-yard, than to the drawing-room or the library. She had few acquirements but such as were necessary to some useful operation of domestic economy, and no accomplishments that were not displayed by her needle in a tambour frame, or her scissors in the delicate cut of a watch-paper. She had a strong natural taste, but its exercise was confined to the decoration of a screen, with maps, charades, and magazine prints—to the capricious forms of a flower-garden, twenty feet

square, and the picturesque arrangement of mosses, pebbles, and shells, in a summer-house.

She had no science whatever, unless we are disposed to make an exception in favour of her meteorological observations on the waxing and waning of the moon, when a race ball was in prospect ; and she wished for the countenance of that luminary, in an excursion exposed to the casualties that usually attend on bad roads and creaking family coaches.

She was also known to have occasionally studied the phenomena of an eclipse through a smoked glass, or in a pail of clear water. Her philosophical researches, indeed, seldom proceeded farther than the most obvious qualities of things ; with the hot and the cold, the rough and the smooth, the hard and the soft, the sweet and the sour, she was tolerably well acquainted, through all their gradations ; but of their occult qualities and chemical combinations, all of which are now so happily laid open, even to the laboratories of the nursery and the boarding-school, she was deplorably ignorant. She would have been terribly out of her element amongst the Blues of the Royal

Institution for scientifically speaking. It might truly be said that,

“Of fire and water, earth and air,
“She knew no more than my Lord Mayor.”

Of hydrogen, oxygen, caloric, and carbonic, and all those erudite combinations of Greek and gibberish, which slide with such scientific elegance through the delicate lips of the fair *illumtnees* who smile on Mr. Brand or Sir Humphrey Davy, she had never even heard, and had no more idea of a botanic garden than of a Bible Society.

There is one branch of knowledge, however, which seems to be, at a certain age, peculiarly within the attainment of ladies who have not been remarkable for their acquaintance with any other ; and in this, Mrs. Oldcourt, during the latter period of her life, arrived at no small celebrity.

The mysteries of Esculapius, though deep and inscrutable to the uninitiated, within the precincts of cities and colleges, have been, not unfrequently, unfolded to the humble priestess of a rustic shrine ; and country districts, too remote and unrefined to invite or reward the residence of a regular physi-

cian, are commonly fortunate enough to possess, in the person of some benevolent old woman, a very respectable substitute for that important functionary.

As the Lady Bountiful of her neighbourhood, Mrs. Oldcourt's skill and humanity enabled her to officiate with considerable success. She possessed family receipts of long standing and established efficacy; had infallible remedies for most incurable maladies; was resorted to by the whole country in cases of ague, water brash, and sore throat; made cold creams of all kinds, for freckles and cutaneous eruptions; and boasted an eye-water that rivalled the renown of a holy well.

But though Mrs. Oldcourt was neither an accomplished, nor a learned lady, and was influenced by the characteristic prejudices of her time, her natural good sense taught her to appreciate the advantages of a cultivated understanding; and though but little encouraged to such a sacrifice of her leisure, by the fun-loving, fox-hunting, and horse-racing circle in which she was placed, she did not limit her literature to cookery-books, and the family physician, but carried her studies through divers musty

and moth eaten volumes of, voyages and travels, poetry and romance ; and the pleasure and improvement which she derived from this source, made her anxious to open it to her children.

The dusty remains of what had once been the library of the castle, were rummaged for this purpose ; but time, moths, and mildews had made sad havoc with the collection ; other agents of destruction, also, had still more lamentably ravaged its stores. The times, indeed, were not favourable to its preservation. The fanatics of that day, like the biblicals of the present, were hostile to profane learning. The Bible with them, like the Koran with the Caliph Omar, at Alexandria, was the one book needful ; and in furtherance of their benevolent design to put down the abomination of popery, they thought the most pious and most prudent means they could adopt, would be, to brutalize as much as possible the followers of that obnoxious faith ; to discourage all erudition and obstruct all education amongst them.

Under the depression, therefore, of a proscribed caste—the discredit of intellectual degradation, and in despair of all literary distinction, it was not much

be wondered at, if the Catholic gentleman sunk in the scale of society. When he found himself driven with holy rage from the established sanctuaries of knowledge—denied even the common aids of parish pedagogues or private tutors—deprived at once of all hope or opportunity of advancement—of the stimulus to exertion and its reward; when he saw the zealous instructors of his youth—the revered ministers of his religion, whose predecessors had been for many centuries, and in all Christian countries, the preservers, the possessors and promoters of whatever has a claim to be called learning in the civilized world—when he saw them persecuted unto death, for practising a rite of his creed, or inculcating a precept of his education, it was not to be wondered at, if, under such circumstances, the Catholic gentleman allowed the spring of his ambition to relax—if, in some measure, reckless of his fortune and his fame, he looked to apathy as a refuge from insult; and delivered himself up eagerly to those unintellectual pursuits, occupations, and pleasures, which blunted the finer feelings of his nature, and made him less sensible of his degradation.

Against the influence of this state of things, the energy and spirit of the Oldcourt family enabled them to struggle for some time ; but the deterioration it was so well calculated to produce amongst them, though slow was progressive ; and the present possessor of the castle was certainly the least cultivated, and most prodigal of the representatives of that ancient family, which had appeared for some generations.

He was, indeed, as little addicted to any rational pleasures or pursuits, and as much devoted to the sports of the field and the enjoyments of the table, as any of the jovial race of Nimrod could desire.

The library, therefore, was a part of his establishment in which he looked for no gratification. It had been before his time in a state of gradual decay ; but during his reign it suffered under a more active and general depredation. The old musty manuscripts were a store of materials from which the housemaids lighted their fires, when the wood happened to be damp and did not kindle readily. The cook had recourse to the loose leaves of an odd volume now and then to

to singe the goose ; and the housekeeper found on the mouldy shelves some tattered pamphlets and parchments, which she sagaciously thought she could convert to some use, as excellent covers for jelly-pots, pickles, and preserves.

The young squire, too, when a boy, with his companions, had rare fun in tearing out the pictures of dogs, horses, and other animals, from several valuable records of Natural History ; and breaking up some bulky quartos of learned lore, to make pellets for pop-guns, tails for their kites, and wadding for their fowling-pieces and pistols, when they were old enough to shoot sparrows, or fire at a mark

Under a process of this kind, it may well be supposed, that the interests of literature suffered much, and needed some protection in the family. During the first years of Mrs. Oldcourt's residence at the castle, she did not interfere to prevent a continuance of the mischief. Young, not very studious, and almost entirely engrossed by the anxieties and apprehensions which the dissipated, and, as she thought, dangerous pursuits of her husband, were calculated to excite in the bosom

of an affectionate wife, she rarely entered an apartment which had long been looked upon only as the lumber-room of the establishment, and could not be considered as even aware of the devastation that was going on there.

When her children, however, arrived to an age at which their management became rather an occupation than an amusement ; an age, when the parent begins to think of his offspring, as well as to toy with them ; when their minds are to be nursed as well as their bodies, and we become as anxious about their future fate, as their present welfare, then Mrs. Oldcourt began to reflect, that amongst the ravaged volumes she had so long overlooked, she might find some assistance in cultivating the understandings of her children, and giving them those advantages of knowledge, which her own deficiencies made her only the more anxious they should enjoy.

She, therefore, to the manifest surprise of the household, took measures to rescue the remains of the library from the general wreck. The spiders were dislodged from their cobweb alcoves ; the moths smoked out in swarms ; and the dust of antiquity disturbed on the worm-eaten shelves ;

and when the subsiding clouds had left the literary chaos in an approachable and tangible state, with the assistance of the parish priest, who had most willingly become her ally in the operation, and added his learning to her zeal, she carefully turned over the confused mass, and found her labours rewarded by the possession of a small, but useful and amusing, collection of classical, and comparatively modern authors.

To be sure, they were rather incomplete and not in the best order. They would not do at Sotheby's, nor much adorn the shelves of the collector of whom Pope speaks, when he says—

“In books, not authors, curious is my lord.”

But Mrs. Oldcourt was more than gratified when assured by her reverend coadjutor, that amongst them were to be found many works of value that might be highly useful in the instruction of her children.

To this object she now appeared to turn her attention with great ardour. Her natural good sense led her to observe the coarseness of character which always results from ignorance. She saw

that they who have no resources of rational pursuits, or elegant amusements, will fill up the vacuum of life with degrading enjoyments; and take refuge in sensuality from that enervating listlessness of mind, which, to the vulgar of all ranks, makes leisure so irksome, and solitude so insupportable.

Her experience of those qualifications which were in the highest repute among the squirearchy, at least of that time, had not increased her respect for them; she was anxious that her sons should have a taste for better things—an ambition somewhat different from that which was to be gratified by the character of a six-bottle man, the fame of a flying leap at a fox-chace, or the glory of gaining twenty shots out of twenty-one at a match of pigeon-shooting. She thought she observed that those who were most devoted to such exploits, and most renowned for them, were not very wise in their generation, or very amiable or exemplary in the various relations of fathers, husbands, or sons. She laboured hard, therefore, to counteract the influence of the circumstances in which her children were placed; and that her boys

were educated in a manner which could be considered suitable to the station of their family in society; or, indeed, that they received any education at all, was to be attributed entirely to her affectionate anxiety, and unwearied importunities for that purpose.

As for the squire himself, he would have been well contented to see his sons galloping about the country as wild as his own colts; as long as they were well fed, well feathered, and well mounted, he could not see what farther was necessary for their comfort, or their character. He would, indeed, have been highly gratified to see them clear a five-barred gate at a standing leap; hit the bull's-eye of a target, or distance the field at a hunting-match. He would have been flattered to find them anxious for the honours, in that course in which he had been himself so distinguished; and to stimulate their ambition, he would frequently expatiate on his own exploits, pointing, at the same time, to the trophies which attended them, in stags' heads, foxes' brushes, and race-cups, won in the character of his own jockey.

He wore a dollar-piece, too, suspended by a rib-

bon round his neck, as an order of merit, which, after the third bottle, he never failed to display, as the evidence of his triumph over the most celebrated shot in the county—a young parson from the University of Dublin. The contest had obtained considerable notoriety; and from the different religions of the competitors, excited an interest, which was with no small difficulty restrained from manifesting itself in a very serious exercise of the accomplishment in question, amongst the partisans of the parties.

The squire was the challenger; the umpires, according to the ceremonial of a late controversial battle in the sister country, were selected from both sides, and time and place were appointed by them. The silver target was fixed to a tree, at as many yards distance as a well-primed Wogden would carry a single ball. All that was gallant and gay of both sexes in the neighbourhood, attended on the occasion; and on that day, the young squire of Oldcourt castle was doomed to be shot through the heart by a better marksman than himself—from the eyes of a fair lady, who afterwards became Mrs. Oldcourt.

The moment of trial was announced by sound of trumpet ; the pistols, which had been carefully examined and loaded, were delivered to the heroes of the day. All was breathless silence—manly breasts glowed, and delicate bosoms palpitated around. Lots were drawn for the first fire. The young parson had the precedence ; he advanced gracefully, but confidently, to the spot upon which he was to place his right foot, and from which he was to take his aim. He looked steadily for a moment at his object without moving his arm from his side ; he then slowly raised his pistol to the level, and without delay firing an instant on his aim, fired. A general rush took place amongst the male spectators to examine the target ; it was found, that the bullet had struck the dollar nearly in the centre, making in it a considerable concavity, fitted to its own diameter. A general shout of admiration and anticipated triumph issued from the partisans of the Established Church, and Popery hung its head. Nothing short of a miracle could now be thought of, to rival such an extraordinary display of skill ; and even the most zealous of the squire's supporters

did not flatter themselves that he was exactly the kind of person in whose favour such an interposition of Providence was to be expected.

The ladies in particular, who, as he was the handsomer man of the two, seemed to be more interested for the lay, than the clerical champion, were more than disconcerted at the defeat of their favourite, which they now considered inevitable. The squire, however, was cool and undismayed. Taking his station firmly, and casting an upbraiding and indignant look on those who appeared to despair of his success, he exclaimed—"Na bocklish," (never mind it); then crying out loudly to clear the ground, and addressing the umpires, he said—"Now turn the target, and I'll make a bed for my bullet on the other side of it."

All now again was silence and anxious attention. The squire, taking off his hat, bowed to the ladies, who were placed in safety on a stand from which they could see the whole process. He then cocked his pistol—paused for a moment as if to collect his powers, and was in the act of raising his arm to the level, when an eager voice was heard from behind him—"Now, Master Dan,

jewel! for the honour of the ould faith, and the blood of the Oldcourts!" The squire dropped his pistol arm to his side, and an angry cry of silence issued from all sides; every eye was directed to the quarter from which the interruption proceeded. The disturber was found to be the old grey-headed steward of the castle, who, in his earnest anxiety for his master's glory, stood unconscious of the commotion he had created. Order having been restored, the squire resumed his station, but stood with his back towards the target. His friends seemed surprised, and had still less confidence in the result, from what they thought an unlucky circumstance, and likely to disconcert his steadiness and self-possession.

The umpires having given the last notice to stand clear of the range of the ball, the attention of each party became intense; even the ladies uttered not a word, and hardly heaved their gentle bosoms with a sigh. The squire now threw his hat on the ground, and drawing himself up erect, gave an encouraging nod to his agitated old servant, saying at the same time, "Now for it, Andrew!" then wheeling round

suddenly in front, as if by signal at a regular duel, he raised his arm to the level and fired. The target fell to the ground! An exclamation of mingled surprise and triumph burst from the whole assembly. Andrew actually hugged his master with delight.

“Erin go bragh!” was shouted by the Catholic *faction*, to use a term by which parties are properly denominated in Ireland. The Protestant *faction*, disconcerted, beheld the laurels shake on their champion’s brow; for even if the shots were considered equal, the extraordinary manner in which the squire had performed his exploit, indicated superior certainty and skill. The rush of curiosity to see and examine the target, was so violent as to endanger the peace of the meeting; to a breach of which, indeed, the heated feelings of both parties, under the excitement of such a contest, but too much inclined them. A good deal of hustling, and some hostile expressions, took place. “The boys” began to flourish their shilelahs, and the irrevocable watchwords of battle quivered on their lips, when the umpires judiciously interfered to allay the rising tumult, by

ordering the trumpet to sound for the attention of the assembly ; while, holding up to view the object of curiosity, they announced their decision. The hopes, the fears, and the eagerness of all to hear the result, checked their pugnacious preparations, and all was calm once more.

On examining the dollar, it was found that the squire had kept his word ; his ball had struck it still more in the centre than that of his antagonist. The cavity was completely reversed, leaving a small rim, just sufficient to demonstrate clearly the effect of both shots.* The squire was therefore proclaimed to be the victor ; and the target was decreed to be delivered to him, as a trophy of his skill, by one of the fair visitants who had witnessed the contest. This was a most happy expedient to prevent the renewal of angry feelings ; for the gallantry which is characteristic of the sons of the shamrock, would not allow the exultation of the one party, or the mortification of the other, to disturb a ceremonial in which the *ladies* were to be concerned.

* The dollar, which still exists, as an evidence of the extraordinary contest here commemorated, the author of the present work has had in his hand.

In compliment to one of the umpires, his daughter—the blooming, blushing, but inwardly gratified Elinor, or as she was commonly called, Nelly Burke, was chosen to officiate on the occasion ; and from the fair hand which was destined subsequently to confer upon him the most valuable of worldly gifts,—a faithful and affectionate wife, Mr. Daniel Oldcourt received the prize, which he afterwards displayed with so much pride, as a trophy at once of love and victory.

CHAPTER VI.

How much has been said, and written, and sung in praise of a country life! Its pleasures have been described as at once rational and innocent; its occupations as equally healthful and useful.

Talk of the country in any company, and unless some *quid nunc* of an old bachelor should happen to be present, its delights are echoed on all sides. The philosopher expatiates on the tranquillity of the country, and its exemption from the vices and follies of what is called the world; the statesman looks to it for repose, and resorts to it during every short respite from his official duties; the patriot rushes to the country, as a refuge from the machinations of corrupt ministers, and the intrigues of courts and cabinets; the man of business

longs to retire to it, that he may enjoy his wealth, relieved from the cares and anxieties which have attended its acquisition; the lover sighs for the shades, that he may indulge his passion in solitude, and have leisure to think of his mistress. The ladies too,—yes, the ladies delight in the country for at least three months of the year; they are charmed with its romantic scenery, its fruits, its flowers, and its *fêtes champêtres*; but they like it best when they can share their raptures with a large party, in a splendid mansion, with a music meeting, a race ball, and a private play in contemplation! In short, the country is in fashion; and if you do not profess a taste for it, you are a Goth, you have no resources within yourself, and what is more, you have no *poetry* in your composition; which is now the severest thing that can be said of any body, who claims to be considered as somebody, in the circles of civilized society.

The praises of a country life have, indeed, been the favourite theme of poets in all ages. The classic page presents us—now here I ought to show my learning, by various apposite quotations

from ancient authors ; but, to say the truth, the only passages of this kind which occur to me at present, are the " *O ! Rus, &c.*" of Horace, and the " *O ! fortunatos nimium,*" of the Mantuan bard. However, these are too trite and commonplace to do much credit to my scholarship. I must, therefore, refer my reader to Doctor —, or the dictionary of quotations. Besides, poets are bad authorities on all subjects ; the language of imagination is a very deceitful medium through which to examine objects of any kind. You might as well peep through the coloured bottles of a chemist's window, in order to ascertain accurately what is going on in the shop.

Poets are out of their element among the realities of life ; they are professors of paradox and exaggeration, and should never be believed but when they deal in fiction. As to their pictures of a country life, they are mere fancy pieces, coloured in the glowing hues of romance, and as unlike as their own similes to what they profess to represent. Of this, every man, with faculties above the level of a bumpkin, must be convinced.

That the country has its charms I do not pre-

tend to deny. I am myself rather partial to it, and always get so rural and romantic about July or August, when everybody, that is anybody, migrates from the civilized parts of the metropolis, that it is with great difficulty I can be detained within the bills of mortality.

The country, indeed, does very well when the sun shines, and you are in agreeable quarters ; in a fine fruitful autumn, when every thing is ripe and glowing, with picturesque scenery without doors, and a well-furnished library within ; when you may walk, or ride, or read, or write, or loll, or lounge, or muse, or meditate, as the whim strikes you ; when you are lucky enough, also, to have no very neighbourly people among the natives to annoy you with their formal visits, or drag you to their still more formal dinners ; at which, while you long to enjoy the fragrance of the fields and the freshness of the air—while the golden sunset, and the rising harvest-moon invite you to behold the almost rival radiance of their orbs, you find yourself condemned to a long gastronomic imprisonment, in a hot, close-curtained hall, steaming with the triple exhalations of the cook, the com-

pany, and the candles ; and entertained with the discussion of such rural, interesting topics, as—the price of hay and oats, the merits of Merino and South Down, the pressure of poor rates, the insolence of paupers, and the prosecution of poachers, at the next assizes.

When not exposed to such a martyrdom as this, and left to the rational enjoyment of nature and your own faculties, a visit to the country agreeably diversifies the routine of the year, and may be endured for a month or two, without much yawning and stretching, or the manifestation of more languor and ennui than may become the character of a gentleman. But, mercy on us ! what a place is the country for a Christian, when winter approaches, and a bleak north-easter blows in your teeth whenever you show your face out of doors ; when, in a melancholy alternation of rain and wind, you see nothing but a swamp, and hear nothing but a hurricane ; when all is dark, and damp, and dreary ; woods stript of their foliage, trees looking like overgrown birch-brooms and gigantic cabbage-stalks ; rooks cawing round their denuded nests, dead leaves whirling in eddies, and

cows in melancholy rumination, amidst their impoverished pastures; when you cannot stir out without being up to your knees in mud, or dragging half a hundred weight at each foot in a clog of clay; when your shoe sinks in your own gravel walk as if you trod on a quick-sand; and if you ride half a mile from your own gate, you are spattered up to your shoulders.

Then think of a frost piece!

“When one white desolation covers all,
And Nature in her winding-sheet appears,
Pale, cold, and lifeless.”

Till a thaw makes slop and slush the order of the day—when melting snows swell ponds to lakes, and rivulets to rivers—while dissolving icicles “from every pent-house prophecy a deluge,” what nerves can sustain you—what spirits bear you up against such an accumulation of horrors! But how are they aggravated, when you find yourself amongst a circle of sportsmen, of fishers, and fowlers, and fox-hunters, and cattle-feeders, “*et hoc genus omne?*”

The country, at such a season, and in such a

circle, it must be confessed, is little favourable to the development of any faculties that are not corporeal, or to the enjoyment of any pleasures which can be called refined. The mental become subordinate to the muscular powers; and though the physical man may flourish in rude health, and ruddy corpulence—though he may be a sound, hale, hearty fellow, who will drink you three bottles at a sitting, and hunt you thirty miles at a stretch, yet the moral man is emasculated and pines away in an intellectual atrophy.

Look at any man of your acquaintance who has had the courage to return, after a seven years transportation to the Botany Bay of a country life. What a strange being he appears! how uncouth in his aspect and manners! how antediluvian in all his notions; you can hardly believe him to be the same person whom you remember to have seen so gay and agreeable, with the *tournure* of a man of fashion, and the talent of a first-rate wit, at the Alfred or the Athenæum. He looks about him as if he had been asleep for half a century, or had just dropped from the clouds. If you speak to him about the literature of the day, or

any recent event in the world of fashion and science, he knows nothing of the matter ; or if, *par hasard*, he should have heard any thing on the subject, he is sure to have it by the wrong end ; in short, he has lost caste in conversation ; he has sunk beneath the common level of discourse, and would be considered below par, even at a corporation dinner, or a city *conversazione*.

Nor can you be surprised at his fate, however you may lament it, for what has the unfortunate gentleman been about all this time ? How has he been employed ? Why, with the exception of a few hours which, perhaps, the last struggles of rational ambition have led him occasionally, to loll and lounge away, in a studious kind of sleep, he has occupied himself in hunting and shooting, and fishing and farming ; which, when combined with the congenial delights of cricket, cock fighting, and cudgel-playing, make up, I believe, the interesting routine of rural enjoyments.

It is not every man that is qualified to enjoy the country, shut up in his library, like Lord Bolingbroke, or Sir William Temple, " chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancies." Though

these great men *resided* in the country, they could hardly be said to *live* there. Uninfluenced by local circumstances, the busy world and its interests engaged them still: they were active citizens of the great metropolis of mind, communing with the past and the future, rather than the present; and meditating those works, which they knew "posterity would not willingly let die." They sought the country, as they would have chosen the most secluded room in a London mansion—that they might study and think, more at leisure, and with less interruption.

A man who has a mind superior to the fascinations of a fox chace, a fowling-piece, or a fishing-rod, sometimes proves that retirement is not always rustication, and that a gentleman in the country is a very different being from a country gentleman.

The anomalies and inconsistencies of the human character, are too common and fantastical to excite much surprise when they come under our observation; it might otherwise be considered as somewhat extraordinary, that the occupations of the savage should become the amusement of civi-

lized man ; that what the one engages in through necessity for his subsistence, the other should pursue for his pleasure through choice. Justly has it been said of man, that he is,—

“ Of half that lives, the butcher and the tomb.”

And, unhappily, it is in his highest state of refinement, that he appears most particularly to merit this character. To massacre, for amusement, any living creature, is not only peculiar to man, but, I am sorry to say, peculiar to civilized man. The *Battues* of the Back Settlements have at least the plea of hunger to excuse them ; and their depredations are limited to the supply of that craving necessity in which they originated. But it has been reserved for the polished sons of cultivated life to indulge, by way of sport, in a wanton infliction of animal suffering, unredeemed by any plea of necessity, or pretence of accomplishment, in which the gentleman puts himself on a level with the vulgar, and must submit to be rivalled, even by his groom, his gamekeeper, and his whipper-in.

I should think your professed sportsman might enlarge considerably the sphere of his enjoyments,

and the scope of his usefulness, (as the utilitarians express it) by occasionally resorting to the shambles, as well as to the shades. The peculiar organ which prompts him to the slaughter of hares, woodcocks, and pheasants, might surely find some congenial recreation, and advantageous development, in *Smithfield* sports, as well as other field sports. To pursue an over-driven ox, for instance, or to knock down a bullock, is at least as manly an exploit as to course a hare, or demolish a covey of partridges; and might, equally, relieve the tedium of existence during the wearisome intervals of his avocations, when, reduced to a state of torpid inactivity, the unhappy sportsman finds nothing to kill—but time.

It must be confessed, that the country, at least during the sporting season, has little claim to be considered as the abode of peace and innocence; it rather may be said, to present a scene of wanton and inglorious warfare, without courage in exertion, or triumph in success; a kind of sanguinary saturnalia, in which, gentlemen are licensed for a time to throw off the character of civilization—to resume the habits of barbarian

hordes, and prowl the woods for prey like the savage.

There is, indeed, much delusion abroad on the subject of rural felicity, as many worthy persons discover to their cost, when fondly imagining, that their cares can be shaken off with their occupations, they retire from active life to the enjoyment of the country.

It is true, the exaggerations of poetry and romance do not now much influence our notions relative to this matter. Arcadian dreams very rarely disturb the imaginations even of love-sick young ladies; the age of *pastoral*, like the age of chivalry, is gone for ever. Shepherds and shepherdesses are now known to be very dirty disagreeable people everywhere, but in a *ballet* at the Opera-House; and you might traverse every corn county in England, searching the stubble-fields from the Land's end, to John O'Groat's castle, without finding a Lavinia amongst the gleaners, or any specimen of female attraction to excite an interest different from that, which the Rev. Mr. Malthus, or the parish overseer might be supposed to feel, in contemplating a pauper in

search of a settlement, or a vagrant likely to become chargeable to the parish.

A country life, indeed, is but little favourable to female beauty. Venus and the Graces look invariably the better for town air. The latter personages, in particular, rarely thrive amidst those woods and fountains where the Muses so much delight to dwell. They are quite out of their element with "dancing fauns, and rusty bumpkins," (as Lingo calls them,) and are seldom found to survive a long rustication. Beauty, in its more elevated and intellectual character, that is,—

"When symmetry is but the shrine in which
The soul is worshipped,"

cannot be considered a field flower; it is never found wild. It is a creature of cultivation—a hot-house plant, rarely brought to perfection, but in the refining temperature of a metropolitan atmosphere. Your country belles are too blooming and robust; they have too much rude health, and exercise their limbs and faculties with a vulgar vigour, quite incompatible with that interesting languor, and elegant helplessness.

which characterize the sylph-like beings that adorn the circles of fashionable society.

A long residence in the country is not, I fear, more favourable to the manners, than to the complexion. After a summer's tanning, it requires the operation of a London season, not only to clear the skin, but to rub off a rustic air which is caught in the fields; and, like the hay asthma, can be cured only in a town atmosphere.

The polish of high life, the *tournure* of taste and fashion, are not to be acquired, or even preserved in the country; the metropolis is the only school for the acquisition of such accomplishments. There, and there only, in good society, is to be acquired that undefinable grace, that last finish of manner, that brilliant varnish of character, which gives its full effect, and appropriate charm, to every quality and acquirement, personal and intellectual; and, though nobody can tell in what this polish consists, though it is reducible to no rule, communicable by no precept, and cognizable by no particular sign, yet, it operates like enchantment over the whole being, speaks in every look, disciplines every feature, modulates the

voice, and regulates every gesture and expression, according to the most delicate suggestions of politeness, propriety, and grace.

Some happy natures, I grant, may be found, who, in the very bosom of retirement, are distinguished by an elegant simplicity and an artless grace of manner, resulting from the union of sensibility, good sense, and good temper; and forming reasonable substitutes for that peculiar fascination, which springs from an intimate intercourse with polished society. Yet, still they are but substitutes; and a thousand little defects of finish and refinement, will be apparent to the eye of the true connoisseur.

How a season or two in London furbishes up, into fashionable semblance, the rustic graces of a provincial belle! When she first visits the metropolis, you are shocked by her *gaucherie* and *mauvais ton*. Then her notions of the pleasures of London are distressing; she is sure to be in love with the fire-works at Vauxhall; can sit out the burletta blandishments of Sadler's Wells, and actually enjoys the rack and manger jokes of Mr. Merryman, at Astley's.

She considers London like a great fair, and is never easy but when running from show to show. Worried, wearied, and provoked, if it be your lot to exhibit the lions, you wander, in an agony of taste, through the horrid routine of metropolitan *amazements*; exhausted by the exactions of her insatiable curiosity, and disconcerted by a thousand violations of that unwritten code, that common law of fashion, which regulates the sensitive concerns of the *beau monde*, and separates by an effectual, though invisible fence, the polished lawn of life from the common field of society.

CHAPTER VII.

IN the last chapter, I flatter myself that I have sufficiently manifested my claims to be considered somebody; as a person conversant with the *beau monde*, and peculiarly qualified to treat of those topics of life and manners, in the discussion of which, the pretensions of the *Roturier* tribe are always so impotent and presumptuous. It is the more necessary to give the reader this "taste of my quality" as early as possible, because, the fashion of an author is now of much more importance than his wit, or his erudition; and a novelist, in particular, is considered on a level with the romance manufacturers of the Minerva press, or the utilitarian literati of the Mechanics' Institute, unless he stamp on his work a strong impression of his intercourse with the higher orders, by a caustic

ridicule, and dignified contempt of the language, manners, and characters, of all the subordinate classes of society. Having thus produced my qualification, I shall now proceed to the ordinary exercise of my narrative functions.

From circumstances connected with the habits and peculiarities of its present possessor, the reader will readily believe, that the castle of Oldcourt was not the place in which the education of a young lady could be very judiciously conducted; nor were the disadvantages which ordinarily result from a constant residence in the country, likely to be, in that ancient mansion, very effectually counteracted. Mrs. Oldcourt, though a sensible, intelligent, and amiable woman, and of a family of much respectability, and still more pretensions, had never been accustomed to move in a highly-polished society.

She had been one of the most conspicuous belles of the race-course and the assize ball; but she never had an opportunity of passing the provincial barrier which separates the Sylvan Graces from the metropolitan pale of fashion and taste. Her manners were mild, matronly, and benevo-

lent, but of that homely and housewife character, which was more suited to preside with dignity in the housekeeper's-room, than in the drawing-room ; and though by no means coarse or vulgar, they could not certainly be considered refined. She had too much good sense not to be aware of her own deficiencies in this respect ; and she was more than anxious, to see her daughter qualified to keep pace with the *march* of refinement, which the affectionate matron could not but perceive had, even in the fox-hunting region of society to which she belonged, left her somewhat behind.

The attainment of this object, however, appeared to be attended with no small difficulty ; she could not communicate to her child those graces which she herself did not possess. The society of Oldcourt castle was neither sufficiently select ; nor accomplished, to afford the benefit of example ; and she never could prevail on herself to think of resorting for assistance to the second-hand manners and superficial adornments of a boarding-school ; desirous above all things to make her daughter a sincere Christian, and a good Catholic. Mrs. Oldcourt was more solicitous for

the purity of her mind, than the polish of her manners; and she determined, if she could not procure for her all the accomplishments she could wish, at least to cultivate in her daughter's character those virtues which are always most successfully inculcated, as well as beneficially exercised—at home.

Influenced, therefore, unavoidably, by her situation and opportunities, it is in the character of a genuine country girl that Grace Oldcourt must be presented to the notice of the reader. But this designation should not too hastily settle her pretensions, even in the mind of the most fastidious votary of style and *ton*. If she *was* a country girl, she was one of that class which has been alluded to in the preceding chapter; and in favour of whom, the bounty of nature, as far, at least, as person and manners are concerned, appears to supersede all the acquirements of art. The air and *tournure* of fashion, she certainly did not possess; and a Chesterfield, or a Chester, would undoubtedly deplore her deficiency in a thousand delicate observances of conventional manners, which pass as the common currency

of polite intercourse ; and are, to the *Roturier* tribes, the least attainable distinctions of the higher circles of society. But she had an unaffected ease, an artless grace of form and movement, which compensated all these deficiencies ; and often excited a more touching, or, to use a fashionable term, a more *intense* interest in the admirer of simple nature, than the most finished fascinations of artificial elegance.

Grace Oldcourt was in stature somewhat above the middle size, as round and full in all her forms, as was consistent with lightness of movement, and elasticity of limb. Her proportions, perhaps, were not sufficiently slender, or sylph-like, to suit the *beau ideal* of a modern fine lady ; but to the eye of an artist, they presented a model of symmetry and shape, in which all the distinctive characteristics of the female form were developed in a picturesque medium, which excluded clumsiness on the one hand, and meagreness on the other. Her face, though it could not be considered regularly beautiful, was strikingly handsome. Her complexion was naturally fair ; but the frequent exposure to the influence of the sun and the air, occasioned

by the habits of a country life, had, in some degree, impaired its delicacy, and changed it to a Hebe hue of health and animation, which a word, or a thought, would sometimes heighten to as becoming a blush as ever modesty and sensibility combined to raise upon the cheek of innocence.

Her manners exhibited in their fullest fascination, that graciousness and affability which have long been the characteristic charm of her countrywomen. Friendly, unaffected, and familiar, without being forward, or ever warranting, even in moments of the most unreserved vivacity, the slightest approach in the other sex, to a freedom inconsistent with that respectful demeanour which is due to modesty and virtue.

Like all girls, however, who, not having companions of their own sex, are necessarily accustomed to the society of their brothers, she had been somewhat of a hoyden ; and slight traces of that character were still occasionally discoverable in certain movements of mirthful enjoyment, and playful hilarity, which the dull, the formal, and the prudish, would perhaps be disposed to repress.

She partook, also, of another quality, which is

common in her country, and not always confined to the male sex. She had a keen relish for wit and humour ; and frequently, with her intimates, animated by some droll associations of thought or circumstance, her spirits would break out into ebullitions of merriment, and manifestations of muscular, as well as mental excitement, which an ancient maiden relative of the family would gravely rebuke, as boisterous and unbecoming.

She certainly has been known, at the moment of raising a cup of tea to her lips, to have been so wrought upon by a sally of her younger brother, who was thought a wit in the family, as to agitate the level of that liquid, at some hazard to her neighbours, by a burst of laughter, which might truly be termed the heart's laugh, though not modulated according to the pitch-pipe which regulates the risible emotions of fashionable vivacity. She would, indeed, while listening to the narration of some comic incident, or ludicrous adventure, throw herself back in her seat, in a kind of exclamatory extasy, and laugh till the tears started into her eyes ; when, blushing at the recollection of the unmeasured mirth in which she had in-

dulged, she would cover her face with her hands, or playfully bow it down, abashed, upon the arm of the sofa on which she reclined.

On these occasions, Mrs. Oldcourt, who, it was observed, never joined the aforesaid antiquated spinster in any mark of reproof or disapprobation, would regard her daughter with an expression of peculiar affection and delight; and looking around on those who happened to be present, she would seem to remonstrate, in a sort of mute eloquence, against the cruelty of repressing the natural effects of a gaiety so innocent and agreeable, or confining the free and faithful emotions of a warm heart, a lively imagination, and an elastic spirit, within the formal and frozen limits of conventional reserve, and arbitrary etiquette.

There is, certainly, something to be said in favour of this maternal expostulation. With all my predilection for the manners of the *beau monde*, I must acknowledge, that fashion may refine too far, may polish the surface of life to a shining hardness, which renders it callous to the sweetest

impressions of sympathy and social benevolence. If all our feelings be dulled and drilled down to a kind of mechanical decorum—if our warmest emotions, subdued to artificial calmness, be managed by rule, and exhibited in masquerade, what becomes of the honest language of the heart—of the original freshness, the natural simplicity and genuine grace of the human character? We may discipline the sensibilities, and manœuvre the manners of society by the flugelman of fashion, like soldiers on a parade, till all the distinctions of individual merit are lost in the common mass, and confounded in the general movement.

But this is twaddle; a canting, puritanical consideration of the matter, which would become a cockney recluse, or a Somers-Town sentimentalist. It is, however, couched in the *ore rotundo* style; and a touch of fine writing, now and then, has a good effect, and gives an *air distingué* to an author's pages. Besides, it is not amiss to show, that, however superfine a man may be himself, he has a proper philosophical respect for the charms of *unsophisticated nature*, which, I believe, is now

the generally approved *synonime* for ignorance and awkwardness, when presented to us under any not absolutely insupportable shape.

But we must not argue against the utility of a thing from its abuse. The legislation of fashion may be pushed to a rigorous extreme, but it cannot be dispensed with. We can no more allow a relaxation of the laws of decorum, than of the laws of the land, without consequences as disastrous to the manners in the one case, as to the morals of society in the other. It is true, the young, the beautiful, and the amiable, may lose something of their natural superiority in conforming to the general standard ; but the old, the ugly, and the ungracious, are rendered less offensive by its enforcements. The fascinations of pure simplicity, and natural grace, may be sacrificed in the substitution of an artificial demeanour ; but the freaks of folly, awkwardness, and caprice, are discountenanced and suppressed by the rigid exactions of established etiquette.

We must not, under pretence of relieving the genuine feelings of the heart from the shackles of form and ceremony, introduce a license of de-

portment which would lower the scale of social decorum, and authorize rudeness and vulgarity to contaminate the polished regions of cultivated life.

Only think of exposing a civilized circle to the horrors of a horse-laugh from a college wit, or a facetious country squire! How would you petrify a polite assembly by the rollicking roll-about graces of a Whitechapel hop, or a Bermondsey ball! No; it is of the last importance that a line should be drawn by the manners of *les gens comme il faut*, which the *canaille* may find it difficult to pass; that all that is urbane, and amiable, and gracious, and accomplished, in the commerce of life, should be rendered secure in unapproachable elegance, from the coarse inroads of the sordid, the mean, and the mechanical.

How bloated wealth and upstart consequence feel confounded and abashed, when they find themselves in the foreign land of fashion, ignorant of the *carte du pays*, and unacquainted with its language, its customs, and its laws! How they writhe under the mortifying consciousness of irretrievable vulgarity! Such gentry are aliens to all civil institutions, and should be repelled by a

vigilant police of *ton* from the territories of taste and refinement.

The few favoured beings, who, like Miss Oldcourt, seem formed to

“Look a Venus, and to move a Grace,”

can never suffer slight or depreciation in any sphere. They bear about them a universal passport, acknowledged through all civilized regions, and never appear but to receive the homage of taste, and establish the supremacy of Nature.

Grace Oldcourt was, indeed, in the qualities of her person and disposition, pre-eminently calculated to win the favour of all classes. Good humour, goodnature, and good spirits, seemed constitutional in her character ; and never were these engaging qualities more agreeably personified. Her presence was as a sunshine to the whole establishment, which never failed to cheer and enliven the domestic atmosphere.

Although the necessity of making her brothers her playmates had given a tomboy character to her childhood, and still influenced her riper years so far as to prevent her being entirely reconciled to the more constrained movements, and sedentary

habits of young ladies, yet, there was nothing which approached to the coarse or masculine in her deportment—none of that robust or romping display of muscular animation, which might, in some instances, lead to a suspicion that Nature had made a small mistake, or intended to qualify the fair for a new Amazonian struggle in favour of the rights of woman.

Her spirit, vivacity, and sweet temper, had, from her infancy, made her a prime favourite with her brothers, who were never so happy as when “sister Grace” could be associated with their sports. In many of their games, indeed, they found her a formidable rival. At a race on the lawn she distanced all competitors; for “the swift Camilla” never “scoured the plain” with lighter foot. She could whip a top with the best performers in that line—made no small figure at blind-man’s buff, and was never known to sit quiet, when a sly whisper from the boys, gave her a hint of a rabbit hunt.

If, indeed, the gymnastic graces which are cultivated in the modern school of female education had been then in vogue, and the judicious system

of Mons. Voelker had been employed to bring into vigorous development the muscular merits of the fair sex, there can be no doubt, that the *energies* (to use a favourite philosophical term) of Miss Oldcourt might have been successfully exerted in those athletic accomplishments which distinguish the young ladies of the present day.

As it was, however, riding and dancing were the only exercises of this character in which any trace of her celebrity, after she had outgrown her frocks, could be found in the family annals.

But it was not only in the amusements of her brothers that she was accustomed to join ; she took part, also, in their studies. Father Clancy, who administered learning, as well as religion, to the establishment, was often heard to declare, that she was his best pupil, and by far the readiest in unravelling the mysteries of Lilly's grammar, and the intricacies of the French verb. This worthy ecclesiastic, indeed, who was a relation of Mrs. Oldcourt, and whose piety and learning well qualified him for the double function he performed in the Oldcourt family, took both pride and pleasure in cultivating the taste and talents of his fair dis-

ciple; and, to his instructions, seconded by the good sense of her mother, and the assistance of such works as their combined exertions had rescued from the wreck of the library, she was indebted for a proficiency in polite literature, which would have done credit to a more systematic education, and was rarely exemplified in the circle in which she was placed.

It does not appear, however, that in the numberless house-wife acquirements of her time, she was particularly skilled. Although

“ The alphabet

In many coloured worsteds owned her toil,”

she had no sampler celebrity. She was shrewdly suspected of having no great partiality for the ingenious arts of knitting, knotting, and netting; and though, in compliance with her mother's wish, she occasionally directed her attention to the labours of the tambour-frame, yet, what with breaking her needles, dropping her stitches, and entangling her threads, her progress was reported to partake very much of the Penelope character—unravelling to-day what was done yesterday.

As to those accomplishments which are more particularly considered ornamental, her position was little favourable to their attainment. They were not in demand among the jovial gentry of the old *régime*; and the new *noblesse*, who had sprung up during the sour sway of the puritans, had not yet so far overcome their tabernacle taste, and barbarizing bigotry, as to appreciate their just value.

Mrs. Oldcourt, indeed, often and loudly lamented that "her poor girl had no opportunities to learn all these things;" but the squire's notion of what was necessary and becoming to the female character, put all idea of expense, for such a purpose, quite out of the question. His daughter, therefore, had not much to boast of in this way; though, in drawing, her mother considered her a prodigy of genius; for she copied every pretty pattern of a flounce that appeared in a new magazine; but, I am sorry to say, the old lady was generally left to work it. She displayed, too, the skill of the Corinthian maid, without having a similar inspiration; and traced the profile shades

of the whole family according to classic authority.

In music, her mother, having discovered an old spinet, whose tones combined the hum of the Jews' harp, with the jingle of a cracked dulcimer, and the harmonious wheezings of the hurdy-gurdy, contrived to get her a few lessons from a wandering minstrel, who deserted from a military band to spread the glories of the gamut through the land. Having a good ear, and a naturally sweet voice, she soon learned enough of the instrument to accompany herself in the ancient melodies of her country; and she sang them with a grace and feeling, which, even those who are accustomed to the strains of a Catalani, or a Pasta, might have listened to with pleasure; for, next to the delight which we derive from the perfection of art, is the charm which true taste must always find in the simplicity of nature.

CHAPTER VIII.

I HAVE been induced to dwell longer on the character of Grace Oldcourt than I intended, or than will, perhaps, appear consistent with the brevity which ought to be observed in a family record of this kind; but she was always a great favourite of mine: Nature had done so much for her, that even the imperfect education which she had received appeared to have given her all the advantages which she could derive from the most refined cultivation.

The diamond, as it came from the mine, was so rich and sparkling, that little polish was required; and though the skilful lapidary, fashion, might have been employed to set it according to

the prescribed taste, its value and lustre might have been impaired in the process.

It may be supposed, that such a girl as I have here attempted to describe—of ancient family, and respectable station in society—was likely to create some sensation in her neighbourhood. Not only the immediate district in which she resided paid homage to her merits, but the whole county acknowledged her attractions; and Grace Oldcourt, as she was familiarly called, was a favourite toast wherever the glass circulated, and beauty was the theme.

At a very early period of her career, she had, indeed, been brought into general notice amongst the surrounding squirearchy, by a process of introduction very unusual, though certainly somewhat characteristic.

When, in the first bloom of her sixteenth year, returning from a morning's ride, accompanied by her eldest brother, and Pierce Doran, a young lad of her own age, an humble dependant of the family, they were all suddenly surprised by the music of a pack of hounds; and as they ascended a hill, a fox burst through a gap in the hedge, and

darted across the road before them, followed instantly by the dogs in full cry, and a large field of horsemen.

Miss Oldcourt's companions, aware that she was that day mounted on one of her father's most spirited hunters, and apprehensive of the consequences, if the horse, who was as fond of the sport as his master, should be tempted to join in the chase, sprang forward to seize the reins; but before they could effect their object, the noble animal, excited by the well-known sounds, cocked his ears, threw up his head, and neighing, as if to announce his intention, started off at full speed, clearing all obstacles with as little effort to himself, as apparent embarrassment to his fair rider.

In the first impulse of their agitation, the young men endeavoured to keep up with the hunter, in order, if possible, to prevent his taking any desperate leap to which his mettle might prompt him. They soon found, however, that every attempt of this kind operated only as a spur to urge the spirited beast forward with still greater rapidity; and as young Oldcourt knew his sister had an

excellent seat, and was no coward on horseback, he beckoned his companion to desist. They contented themselves, therefore, with following at a prudent distance, trusting, that she might herself succeed in arresting the progress of her steed, or if she did not, that she was too good a rider to be easily dismounted by any ordinary casualty that might occur on such an occasion.

On clearing the low hedge, which formed one of the fences of the bridle-road that skirted a hill of considerable magnitude, the scene which presented itself to our party was animated and picturesque in the highest degree. On a wild, extensive heath, variegated with patches of furze-bushes and fern, stretching in a gentle slope to the borders of a river which meandered in a long line through the valley below, the whole hunt appeared in gay confusion, hounds and huntsmen eagerly pressing forward from different quarters; some winding their way along the green paths that opened through the brown luxuriance of mountain vegetation, others impatiently bounding over bush and bramble, all dashing on at full stretch, and displaying, in its characteristic

effects, the half-frantic exhilaration produced by active exertion and inspiring sounds.

The superior speed and spirit of the animal that had been thus excited to take part in the sport, soon carried him and his rider into the midst of those who were foremost in the pursuit; and the attention of the whole field was immediately directed to the extraordinary and interesting accession to their number, which they so suddenly perceived.

Grace Oldcourt, at sixteen, had attained to her full stature; and her light and graceful figure appeared to great advantage in a riding-habit of dark green, close fitted to her well-proportioned shape, and open at the neck, like a boy's collar. Her hat, in the first rapidity of her motion, had fallen from her head, and hung at her saddle-bow, suspended by a ribbon, which a judicious precaution against a high wind had attached to it. A profusion of beautiful brown hair streamed loosely to the breeze, or waved in clustering ringlets round a face, in which the sweetest expressions of beauty, youth, and innocence, were combined, with just as much of alarm as served to heighten her

bloom, and give a touching interest to her whole appearance.

She sat her horse with a grace and self-possession, which so far precluded all the awkwardness of apprehension, that she seemed rather to impel her steed forward, than to be carried away by his impetuosity. Some censorious persons of her own sex, indeed, subsequently insinuated, that she was not unwilling to give him his head on the occasion.

Whether she found her strength inadequate to restrain him, or that, according to the aforesaid suggestion, her young and ardent spirit was really influenced by the enthusiasm of the chase, certain it is, that having succeeded in replacing her hat on her head, and given an encouraging nod to her brother, as much as to say, "Never fear for me;" she manifested afterwards, no particular desire to interfere with the good pleasure of the noble animal, who bore his precious burthen with so much pride, but rather appeared quietly to deliver herself up to his discretion.

The chase, which had been a long one, now

approached the neighbouring river. Reynard, having run for some distance by its side nearly exhausted, made one desperate effort for his life, and suddenly plunged into the current. The hounds and most of the horsemen dashed after him without hesitation. A rapid glance of painful interest was at this moment, by all, directed to Miss Oldcourt. She was observed to make an eager effort to pull up as she approached the bank, but finding it without effect, desisted from the useless struggle; and with admirable dexterity, before her horse could spring into the water, she drew her left foot backwards, tucked the skirts of her habit tight about her, and not having that preposterous train of broad-cloth, with which the tailor and bad taste have contrived to encumber the fair equestrian of the present day, she reached the opposite side of the river, without any other injury than that which resulted from the splashing occasioned by those who anxiously pressed to her assistance. Among the number, her brother and young Doran had rushed forward, with the greatest agitation, fearing more from the rapidity of the stream than its depth. But they were not so

well mounted, and could not approach her in time.

The chase was now resumed with fresh vigour, and being on an open heath, the dogs soon ran down the luckless object of their pursuit; Miss Oldcourt, in high style, coming in at the death, and reining up with a grace and ease which astonished the few who had been able to keep pace with her.

As the members of the hunt came in, they eagerly pressed round her, through curiosity to behold a person who had excited an interest so extraordinary, to compliment her on her skill, and congratulate her on her safety; but the embarrassed girl, blushing, and confounded at the novel scene in which she made so conspicuous a figure, burst into tears, and would have fallen exhausted to the ground, if young Doran, who had just come up, had not sprung from his horse and caught her in his arms. Her brother, who had now also arrived, supported her to a cottage close at hand; and refreshed by a draught of water, she, in a few minutes, was able to remount, and prepare for the homeward route, which had been so unexpectedly interrupted. The presence of her escort some-

what restored her self-possession; and the circumstances altogether threw over her such a bloom of beauty, such a glow of modesty and animation, as the goddess of the woods herself would have attempted to rival in vain.

The master of the hunt, Sir Neal O'Flaherty, now approached, with several of his companions—bowed respectfully to Mr. Oldcourt and his sister, and professed himself to have been formerly acquainted with their father, though not personally known to them. He then gallantly laid the fox's brush at the foot of the young lady, as the trophy of the day—complimented her, in the name of the Kilboyne Hunt, and acknowledged the honour done them by her presence in the chase: an event which he declared they would not fail to celebrate in many bumpers to her health and happiness.

It may be supposed that the report of an occurrence of this nature, to which so many were witnesses, was soon spread around in a sporting country; and the fame of the fair huntress of Oldcourt Castle, her beauty and personal qualifications, became the subject of general conversation in every circle.

Such, indeed, was the interest she excited, that even the rancour of religious animosity appeared to relax in her favour; and the junior male members, at least of the few orthodox grandees in the neighbourhood, seemed disposed to enter into a more condescending intercourse than usual with her family. They were, indeed, not unfrequently observed to resort to the chapel of Oldcourt, in the hope of seeing the object of their admiration, when going to or returning from her devotions; and some sour spinsters of the Cromwellian race were heard to declare, that if countenance was to be thus given to such Popish pretensions, they would not answer for the preservation of the Protestant ascendancy.

The state of society in Ireland at that time was such, as frequently to give rise to real or pretended apprehensions, not much more rationally founded, as to the safety of our glorious constitution in church and state.

In other countries, whatever shades of distinction may result from rank, religion, or occupation, the two grand divisions of the people may be said to be—the rich and the poor. Whatever feuds,

factions, or animosities, may exist amongst them, they all consider themselves as one people—as members of the same community, and combined in the pursuit of one common interest, according to their different views—the welfare of their country.

But in the *sister* kingdom, as it is affectionately denominated, although wealth and poverty have not failed to work their usual effects, yet other causes have led to a classification of its inhabitants, much more effectual for the purpose of distinction, disunion, and separation.

From the period when his holiness, Pope Adrian, thought proper to compliment his countryman, Henry the Second, with the sovereignty of the Island of Saints and that monarch, in order to enforce submission to the pontifical authority, proceeded to make war on the Irish, with all that piety and pertinacity which so many of his royal successors have since employed for the opposite purpose of compelling them to reject it—from that important era, in short, when Squire Ball, like Squire Western, resolved to make his insular relative happy, “ although he should break

her heart for it;" the inhabitants of Ireland have, in a great measure, formed two distinct nations, differing in language, manners, and customs; and actuated by such opposite interests, as may be supposed to influence those who covet their neighbours' goods, and those who are disposed to resist the breach of the commandment which forbids the indulgence of such a desire.

When the adventurers who gave way to this seductive propensity had succeeded so far as to establish themselves in the country, the distinctive appellations bestowed upon them and the Milesian race were, the Anglo-Irish and the native Irish. In process of time, the Anglo part of the name fell into disuse, and the two parties were designated as the Irish of the pale, and the Irish without the pale, or the mere Irish, as they were termed; and for the killing and slaying of one of whom, three-and-sixpence, or half-a-crown (I forget which), was considered an adequate penalty.

When that prolific manufactory of creeds, which has been humorously called the reformation, was first set on foot by the renowned theological artificer of uxorious memory, Henry the

Eighth, and had been introduced, with all its blessings, into the benighted land of the shamrock, the conflicting powers were content to carry on their political and religious ravages, massacres, and confiscations, under the several denominations of Catholics and Protestants; the latter term including every shade of dissent, from the Episcopalian and the Independent, down through all the modifications of folly and fanaticism, which the exercise of the sacred right of private judgment, unaided by sense or learning, had so happily operated to produce.

When the infraction of the treaty of Limerick, and the infliction of the penal code, rendered the triumph of the Protestant ascendancy complete, the line of separation between the two classes was marked by the ingenious aggravation of every obnoxious circumstance, which could indicate superiority on the one side, and subjection on the other—which could most offensively manifest domination without limit, and degradation without hope.

Even in those parts of the country, where the same language, and the same general habits.

had been long prevalent with each, the Protestant never appeared to consider himself as of the same race with the Papist, or as having any interest in common with the mass of the people. All the mortifying privileges of a superior caste were haughtily assumed by the predominant party, and acted upon through every gradation of society, patrician and plebeian, in peace or war, in public or private, in modes, manners, and establishments. Social intercourse was almost entirely suspended; for if the Protestant lord of the ascendant was willing to receive him, the Catholic gentleman recoiled from an association in which he was considered an inferior, and admitted by courtesy rather than by right.

The domineering spirit, indeed, which marked the partisans of "*the glorious, pious, and immortal memory*" in Ireland, pervaded all classes of that body, from the highest to the lowest, and had no small tendency to create the difference of character which it assumed. While the meanest minion of the establishment beheld his Catholic countryman with the insolent air of conscious authority, the latter was cowed down to the

abashed aspect of helpless subjugation; and at length, though roused to occasional paroxysms of rage, under the lash of local oppression, the abject victims of political and religious persecution, began to submit quietly to the yoke of those

“ Who made them slaves, and told them 'twas their charter.”

But it was in the exercise of their religion, and in their places of public worship, that the fallen fortunes of the Irish people seemed to be most strikingly and offensively exemplified.

When they beheld the most ancient and gorgeous religion of Christianity, the only religion in which, according to Lord Chesterfield, “ God Almighty is worshipped like a gentleman,” stripped of its pomps, its power, and its emoluments—when they saw the Faith which had flourished in splendour, for so many centuries, and which had been enshrined, throughout the civilized world, in the noblest and most magnificent temples that have been constructed in modern times—when they saw this long venerated Faith expelled from its sacred abodes, driven to take shelter in mountains and

caverns—and when, at length, permitted to re-appear amongst men, they saw it reduced so low as to raise its altars in sheds and out-houses, little better than the hovels of the meanest among those who have adhered to its proscribed doctrines with such unshaken fidelity—then it was, when joining the assembled crowds of his fellow-countrymen, in the worship which was endeared to him alike by its principles and its persecutions, that the Irish Catholic felt most sensibly his degradation—that his resentments often murmured in his prayers, and seemed almost devotion.

There were few occasions for the excitement of those feelings better calculated to produce them, than when the numerous congregation of the Rev. Father Clancy were assembled in and around the wretched edifice, which was dignified by the name of the chapel of Oldcourt.

At the entrance of a narrow by-road, leading from the centre of the village, and on a sort of triangular, and apparently unappropriated space of ground, which might remind you of those waste spots at the highway-side, in which the traveller in England so often traces the littered indica-

tions of a gipsy encampment, was situated this humble representative of the ancient church of Ireland.

Its exterior, in all architectural qualities, would have been discreditable to an English barn ; and it was distinguishable from the still ruder structure of that character, which is to be found in the farm-yard of an Hibernian agriculturist, only by a clumsy attempt to add, at one end of it, a transverse erection, which might give it something like the figure of a cross. The walls, raised but little higher than the ordinary stature of a man, were composed of mud and gravel, worked to a tolerably solid consistency, through the agency of straw and hair.

The roof was of thatch, which time and the vegetative vigour of nature had pretty generally covered over with a variegated coat of moss. The internal accommodation of the building, corresponded with what might have been expected from the exterior. The walls were naked, and early as rough on one side as on the other, except where the pressure of many brawny shoulders in frieze coats, had polished them to a smooth surface.

The floor, formed of earth and sand, was har-

dened into an irregular level, which often supplied a wet, generally a dirty, and always an uneven ground, on which to stand or kneel. Above, no ceiling pressed upon your head; but as your eye explored the dusky expanse, it presented to view a goodly but confused assemblage of rafters and cross-beams in the rough, with an ingenious intersection of wattles and twigs, contrived to form a basis for the thatcher's toil.

In the nooks and crevices, so conveniently afforded by this architectural trellis-work, the swallows were accustomed to build their nests; and, occasionally, some one of them, more daring than his fellows, would, perhaps in the midst of divine service, flutter over the heads of the congregation, and "wing the upper air" of the chapel, on a visit to a neighbouring nest.

At the centre of the upper end, a small space was rudely railed off and boarded for the erection of the altar, which was ascended by a couple of steps. A portion of the wall, of equal breadth with the space enclosed, was roughly pannelled and painted, as a compartment of superior character, rising as high as the coping of the roof

would admit, and from which projected a small flat ceiling, just sufficient to cover from the cobwebbed canopy above, the altar and the platform upon which it stood.

On the altar, a small wooden crucifix, in an ill-constructed niche, supplied the place of sculptured or pictorial decoration, and served to stimulate the piety (or, according to the controversial vigour of the day, the *idolatry*) of the people, who reverently bowed the head to the imaged suffering of him who preached peace and goodwill amongst men.

The chapel was furnished with neither bench nor chair ; but in the farthest corner of the shorter limb of the cross a single pew appeared, separated from the open space by three oaken rails, and furnished with seats, attached on two sides to the wall. The dignified station which this arrangement created was allotted to the Oldcourt family, as due to their superior consequence ; and they were always prompt to share whatever accommodation it afforded, with any stranger of respectability who presented himself at mass. The appearance of the ladies of the castle in their places was in-

deed, generally, the signal for commencing the service—Father Clancy always taking care to occupy himself very deliberately in unfolding and arranging the vestments necessary to his function, till a glance to their side of the chapel had assured him of their presence.

Their arrival was always announced by some little bustle: for as their pew was situated at a considerable distance from the entrance, the individuals of the family, and whatever stranger followed in their train, had to make their way by files, through a dense, and apparently impenetrable crowd; a task which would have been attended with no small difficulty, if the respect and civility of the people had not, at whatever inconvenience to themselves, always opened for them an unmolested passage.

The chapel was so much too small for the congregation, that the half of those who attended could not by any pious pressure be wedged within its walls. Many of them, therefore, whose consciences would not allow them to dispense with a "mouthful of prayers on the Sabbath-day," were under the necessity of indulging their de-

votions on the outside of it ; and long lines of the humbler classes, uncovered, and on their knees, were to be seen in all weathers, extending to a considerable distance round the doors, all eager to place themselves at least within the tinkling of the little bell, which announces the most solemn part of the ceremony at which they were so desirous to assist ; and evincing, by many fervent ejaculations, their participation in the devout feeling which it is intended to excite.

CHAPTER IX.

THE homely structure which, in the last chapter, I have attempted, without exaggeration, to describe, formed but a sorry shrine for the ancient faith of St. Patrick—for a national church of twelve centuries: a church which, through the erudition of its ministers, and the liberality of its institutions, contributed so much to spread the light of religion and literature amongst the rude Anglo-ancestors of those who now libelled its doctrines, and exulted in its degradation. In this humble temple, from the mouth of that venerable pastor who so long officiated at its altar, did I first hear the great truths of Christianity illustrated and enforced, in language mild, persuasive, and simple.

Here was I first impressed with the value of

that divine precept—that laconic code of religious legislation, which simplifies all the duties of society, and regulates all the moralities of life—that principle of peace and charity, which all Christian sects profess to inculcate, and forget to practice—avow without reserve, and violate without ceremony or shame—“*Do as you would be done by.*”

From the serious strain of the last paragraph, I am afraid my reader will think I am going to preach him a sermon ; but there is no danger. However erratic I may prove myself in this literary excursion, I shall not wander into any puritanical path.

I have some reason, certainly, to suspect that I am approaching to that period of human life which is generally characterized by *prosing*, if not by *preaching*—when every man becomes more or less an historian, at least of his own exploits, and indulges his narrative propensities to a somewhat greater extent than his friends are disposed to admire ; but all this is natural. When we have made a certain progress in the great journey of life, we begin to doubt the attainment of those

objects which we have pursued with such avidity ; and, what is worse, we begin to distrust their value, even if they were attained. Our ardour begins to cool—we pause in our path, to recover breath for a new exertion, while we turn round to contemplate the distance we have travelled, and talk over the events which have chequered our course. As we become less active, we become more narrative ; the retrospect seems more amusing than the prospect, and our recollections grow vivid in proportion as our hopes decay, till at length we are content to resign the game altogether to younger sportsmen, and console our disappointed vanity, by recounting the share we have had in the pleasures and perils of the chase.

Thus it is that all men are willing to become their own biographers : for as there are few persons, even amongst the most ill-favoured, who do not fancy they have something sensible or agreeable in their air or aspect which compensates for the want of beauty ; so there are but few amongst the most insignificant and obscure, who do not flatter themselves that a judicious account of

"Their life, character, and behaviour," would be interesting to the public, and might deserve to

"Live in description, and look green in song."

We seldom contemplate our appearance in the glass of the past, without wishing to paint our own portraits for the benefit of posterity ; and never, surely, were there so many artists, as at present, engaged in this agreeable occupation.

The organ of self-commemorativeness was never so interestingly developed, or the vagaries of personal adventure recorded to such a voluminous extent. Lords and ladies, authors and actors, poets, painters, and musicians, "*Scribitus Docti*," &c. We all rush eagerly forward in autobiographic rage, under every form of memoir, reminiscence, and recollection, which can enable us to enjoy what a celebrated artist in this way, the late Colley Cibber, honestly called "the dear delight of talking of one's self through two whole volumes."

Pliny says—and what Pliny says is not to be slighted by any man who has been fortunate enough to be flogged through the seven forms of

Eton, Harrow, or Westminster—Pliny says—I love to talk of Pliny, and Tully, and Maro, and Varro, and the Mæonian eagle, and the Mantuan swan ; it looks deep and erudite ; it announces a superior caste, and indicates academical accomplishment. A quotation from the learned languages operates as a classical *coup de grace* ; it clenches the nail of argument, and settles you at once. The meanest thoughts, expressed in Latin or Greek, like beggars in brocade, assume a sort of dignity ; and when you dispose a few of them judiciously, they shine like spangles on the homespun garb of vernacular vulgarity, and render it a more fitting dress for the high conceptions of the scholar and the gentleman.

But I am forgetting what Pliny says. He leaves mankind but one alternative ; that of “ doing something that deserves to be written, or writing something that deserves to be read.” Now, when we become our own historians, we boldly embrace both sides of the alternative ; like Cæsar, we commemorate our own exploits, and advance a double claim on posterity for reputation.

But though, I confess, I feel a strong desire to

emulate the renowned reminiscents of our age—
though I may, gentle reader ! be tempted one of
these days,—

“*Celebrare domestica facta,*”

and present you with my own life, throwing you my
times, perhaps, into the bargain ; yet, as I am at
present busied amongst the records of the very
respectable family in whose concerns you begin, I
trust, to take some little interest, I shall return to the
Rev. Father Clancy, and the chapel of Oldcourt.

The priest, in some respects, was certainly not
ill suited to the temple ; plain, homely, and un-
pretending—a somewhat uncouth tenement of
man.—

“ But yet within enshrined,
Was truth and virtue, piety and peace.”

Always rather under the middle size, the
compressing operation of time had reduced
him still more below the ordinary standard.
Though his person by no means exhibited
that kind of corpulence, which is generally
supposed to result from a liberal indulgence in
clerical comforts, yet his cheerful temper, quiet
conscience, and contented spirit, encouraged such

an accumulation of integuments, as co-operating with his short figure and peculiar style of dress, gave him an appearance somewhat portly and rotund. He was, certainly, to use a familiar idiom, "in good case." But though not quite so pale and picturesque as Sterne's monk, his aspect presented you with "no common-place idea of fat contented ignorance," and betrayed no bloated characteristic of excess.

The predominant expression of his face, was benevolence and kindness. In conversation, intelligence lighted up his little grey eyes; and though generally mild and forbearing in his deportment, his brow became occasionally stern in reproof; and from the habitual exercise of that influence over the less enlightened portion of his flock, with which his sacred function invested him, it bore the evident stamp of decision and authority.

Over a by no means scanty crop of grey hair, he wore a wig of nondescript character, partaking in some degree of the scratch, the buckle, and the bob; but when frizzed by the village tonsor, for the ceremonial of the Sabbath, and frosted by a copious contribution of flour

from the drudging-box, it manifested behind a bushy protuberance, which seemed intended to emulate the dignity of that full-bottomed decoration, which was generally supposed, at that time, to give sapience as well as solemnity to the lawyer, the physician, and the divine.

Beneath this professional adjunct, however, which did not always preserve its exact station, his own insurgent locks would occasionally peep forth, as if to show how unwillingly the natural honours of his head submitted to such an artificial incumbrance. His hat was of the three-cornered cut; but the pressure of the hand produced a lateral expansion of the leaf, which gave it some resemblance to the broad brim of a Quaker, or that species of beaver which is usually represented as the fashionable covering of the Cromwellian crew.

This hat, when he found that he carried rather too much sail in a high wind, he was in the habit of securing in its place by a coloured pocket-handkerchief passed over it, and tied under his chin. He wore a long cravat rather loosely arranged, the ends of it carelessly introduced through one of the

button holes of his vest. His coat, without cape or collar, and his waistcoat, were always of the same colour—a snuffy brown, the latter with large flaps, extending half-way down his thigh, and containing pockets in which his snuff-box and his spectacle-case were always deposited. A pair of black leather inexpressibles, which much riding, much wear, and rough weather had changed to a rusty, and in some parts to a glossy grey, terminated in long stiff gaiters rising above the knee, and fastened at the side, as was not unusual at that day, by the agency of an iron wire, extending the whole length over these *leggings*, as brother Jonathan calls them. He was in winter accustomed to draw on a pair of long coarse woollen stockings, which reached in a roll nearly to his waistcoat-flaps; the addition of a pair of spurs and a whip, with alash long enough for a coachman's, and which he always carried doubled in his hand, completed the costume in which, on Sundays and holydays, he mounted his nag to proceed in the performance of his duties.

The steed, too, was a character as well as his master; his qualities were but little accredited by

his coat. Not much larger than a pony, he was evidently better kept than curried; rather fat and strong, than slim or sleek. His untrimmed fetlocks, and unrepressed luxuriance of mane falling on each side of his short neck—a tail originally curtailed, but now shaggily descending in a switch-like similitude of its natural length, all strongly denoted a careless grooming, and very irregular *manège*. His gait of going also, seemed to be peculiarly adapted to the equestrian acquirements of his reverend rider—neither a walk nor a trot; it never broke into a canter, much less a gallop, but was a kind of ambling pace, or quadruped waddle, which contrived to get over the ground fast, without the toil of effort, or the appearance of speed.

The Protestant and Popish establishments of the parish of Oldcourt, were certainly, in every respect, illustrative of the degree of favour enjoyed by the respective religions to which they belonged. The appearance of the priest formed as striking a contrast to the sacerdotal dignity of the parson, as that of the chapel, to the architectural importance of the church.

The exemplary manner in which the worthy priest performed all the duties of his function, and his disinterested zeal for the spiritual and temporal welfare of his flock, made him a general favourite. Wherever he appeared, the tenants of the cabin turned out as he passed, like the guard on the approach of their commanding officer, to show their respect for him; the women dropped their courtesies, and wished his reverence long life. The children, I confess, were a little afraid of him, particularly if they had neglected to attend the chapel to say their catechism. The poor looked to him as a sure resource in all their difficulties; he was their counsellor in worldly concerns, their physician in disease, and their consolation in death. Always their friend, and often their protector.

The oppressor and the persecutor were sometimes shamed into forbearance by his interposition; they were disconcerted by the calm intrepidity of his character; and though they might disregard his resentment, they shrunk from the exposure which they knew would result from his fearless indignation.

The wants which he could not himself remove,

he warmly represented to those whose means enabled them to be charitable. Never was the affectionate name of father, which is generally applied to the Catholic clergy in Ireland, more justly bestowed. He waited not to be summoned to the succour of the distressed ; he anxiously sought out the haunts of misery and shame, and thought himself bound to labour for their relief, as well as their reformation ; there was not a hovel in his parish with which he was not acquainted, and whose inmates were not under his vigilant observation. No man could live in the commission of offence without incurring his private reproof ; and if he continued in his immoral courses, after due and solemn warning, he denounced him by name in the face of his congregation. This measure, which amongst a simple and religious people, as the Irish peasantry naturally are, had almost the effect of excommunication, seldom failed to bring the offender to a sense of his misconduct, or oblige him to remove to some other district, where the example of his licentiousness might be less zealously repressed.

Such, indeed, was the authority procured for him by his virtues, over even the most disorderly of his flock, that the magistrates, with the civil and military power at their command, were glad to resort to his influence, as the readiest means of allaying those commotions which their own misconduct frequently excited. Often has his presence dispersed a tumultuous assembly of his countrymen, when military menace had been disregarded, and the Riot Act would have been read in vain.

Even at their fairs, when a too copious use of the *native* had excited their pugnacious propensities, and a forest of shilelahs flourished around him, Father Clancy would ride into the middle of the fray—command them to peace, and sometimes lay about him with his horse-whip on the shoulders of the combatants, without the slightest apprehension that the most infuriated amongst them would raise a hand to his injury, or utter a word insulting to his sacred character. Their angry passions subsided as he spoke; and, like quarrelsome children, though anxious to fight each other, they shrunk respectfully before the

displeasure, and submitted to the chastisement of one whom they considered as a common parent, and knew to be a disinterested friend.

His character was, indeed, particularly calculated to win the heart of an Irishman. He was gracious, he was generous, and he was just. Though grave and solemn in the performance of his functions, he did not think it necessary to parade his clerical importance on ordinary occasions. In the common intercourse of life, he was cheerful, familiar, and unpretending. He knew the value of condescension and kind words with a warm-hearted people, and was sensible how much easier it is to gain favour from their affections, than submission from their fears.

He did not restrict his communication, even with the humblest of his flock, to the exercise of his official duties; he would enter their cabins—familiarly seat himself on the stool, which the good woman would wipe down with her apron, for his accommodation—inquire with some interest into their concerns, and, if he chanced to find them at their meals, he would never offend their feelings by refusing to partake of their hospitality, though of-

ferred to "his reverence" with no more alluring recommendation, than, "a noggin of milk, fresh from the cow," or "a fine new praty."

Flattered by the notice of so important a personage as the priest is considered in an Irish village, the objects of his attention were raised in their own esteem, because they saw, that although they were poor, and often destitute, they were not despised or disregarded; they became doubly anxious not to incur his displeasure, or oblige him to withdraw from them that countenance which at once was soothing to their feelings, and advantageous to their interests. They saw in him, a man who had devoted himself to the performance of duties in which no selfish passion could be gratified, nor sinister purpose suspected. They could not doubt the disinterestedness of him who was ready, at all hours—by day or by night, to attend to their spiritual wants, and as far as he could, to relieve their temporal necessities; who, in the midst of pestilence and death, when terror had rent asunder the bonds of nature and affection, and the powerful impulse of self-preservation had driven the child from the parent, and the

parent from the child, would fearlessly take his station beside the straw bed of the wretched victim, to administer the last rites of his religion; and breathe the hopes of futurity in the ear of him, whom this world had abandoned to despair.

They could not doubt of his justice, for they knew him to be upright and impartial; rigid in repressing dishonesty, and in exacting retribution for wrong. Indulgent to those errors and offences that found some palliation in their peculiar circumstances, and the frailty of our common nature; but severe and unsparing in reprobation of their vices and their crimes.

Such was Father Clancy! parish priest of Oldcourt, and chaplain to the respectable family of that name. At the Castle, indeed, he officiated in a double capacity; and was not only spiritual director to the establishment, but preceptor to the children, who were wholly indebted to him for their education. And well qualified was he for either character; for he was a good scholar, as well as a good Christian. His religion was mild and charitable, displaying a

rational piety, remote alike from visionary mysticism, and vulgar superstition—teaching, that we may be exemplary in our morals, without being morose in our manners, or gloomy in our habits; and that the serious duties, are not incompatible with the innocent pleasures of life.

His attainments in literature, were such as would have distinguished him in a much higher sphere than that in which he moved. He was perfectly conversant with the Greek and Latin fathers—had reconnoitred the ground of theological warfare, from the days of Origen and Arius, down to those of Luther, Calvin, and John Knox; and was so well armed for the controversial field, that, whenever in a fit of polemic rashness, the parson, or any other champion of the establishment, thought proper to indulge in a fling at Popery, the assault was repelled with a spirit, and at the same time, a temperance, which left no laurels for his adversaries. He was averse, however, to disputation on religious subjects; and the discourses which he addressed to his flock, were directed rather to explain the duties of a Christian, than the doctrines of a theologian.

But when the occasion called for it, he never flinched from a vindication of what he considered the truth.

Like all persons who were, at that period in Ireland, destined for the priesthood of the Catholic church, he was obliged to resort to a foreign seminary for his education ; the wise and liberal policy of the system of misrule, which then existed under the name of government in that country, not permitting any domestic establishment for such a purpose. At St. Omer's, he passed through his course of study with so much credit, that a situation of superior trust and dignity in the Irish College at Paris, was offered to his acceptance. But he preferred returning to his own country, where, uninfluenced by the dreams of ambition, or the suggestions of selfishness, he devoted himself to a career of humble usefulness, obscure toil, and disinterested virtue.

It must be acknowledged, however, that with all these merits, Father Clancy had one fault, "and that was a thumper." He had no great respect for what we patriots call liberty ; and looked upon

a republican as little better than one of the wicked. To the Americans, in particular, who about that time had begun very seriously to disturb the repose of all "regular governments," he bore as great an antipathy as was consistent with the benevolence of his nature. It was observed, that he never took his glass of wine (or punch I should say, which he liked much better) with such relish, as when he could accompany it with his favourite toast of, "*General Washington in the suds!*"

He maintained, that monarchy was the most natural, and the most rational form of government. It grew out of the spontaneous arrangement of things, and accorded with the principles upon which human society must have been originally constructed. It was a system (he would say) suggested by common sense, sanctioned by analogy, and justified by experience. It was founded on three great bases—the paternal, the pastoral, and the patriarchal. The father and his children—the shepherd and his flock—the patriarch and his people. It imitated the harmony of

heaven, and was the best security for the happiness of man upon earth.

Republics, he contended, were always turbulent and discontented, factious, immoral, and unhappy : and he illustrated his position, by a reference to the gloomy tyranny, and debauched servility of the Venetians ; the mercenary immorality, and boorish drudgery of the Dutch. His instances were certainly not ill chosen ; the United States had not at that time, furnished a knock-down argument on the other side of the question ; and, if the ancient republics were started in the race against him, he ran out of the course in a philippic against the practice of civil slavery which prevailed amongst them, declaring, that the boasted political systems of antiquity, which our classical prejudices teach us to admire, were, as far as concerned the security and happiness of the great mass of mankind, vile schemes of tyranny and oppression, which could be paralleled only by the state of society that disgraces our West India colonies.

On the subject of trade, also, he held opinions

which would not much recommend him to the mercantile world. Commerce, he considered as the great corrupter of nations; as promoting the sordid and selfish, in opposition to the liberal and generous feelings of our nature; as making wealth the measure of merit; establishing gambling on system, under the name of speculation, and stretching every man's conscience to the utmost limits of the law.

CHAPTER X.

AMIABLE, excellent man ! religion in him was attractive, because it was what religion ought to be—a spirit of peace and good will amongst men. It seemed impossible to doubt the excellence of a system which inspired a devotion so pure, a disinterestedness so exemplary.

He was no rancorous bigot, brandishing the polemic flail over the heads of his congregation ; and occasionally belabouring his own unhappy pate in the frenzy of his zeal, and the awkwardness of his ferocity ; he was no presumptuous dealer in dogmas, urging persecution here, and denouncing damnation hereafter, in the name of him who says “ Judge not lest you should be judged,” on all who differed from his creed and believed a

little more or less than himself. He was no canting hypocrite, who, finding, that "godliness was great gain," put on the mask of piety to impose on weak minds, and extort tribute in this world, by the terrors of the next. He was no bewildered fanatic raving in the mania of mysticism, and enveloped in the gloom of grace—mistaking vain dreams for beatific visions, and fancying intimations of spiritual import, in the nightmare maladies of indigestion.

He was truly a Christian pastor ; not only teaching the doctrines, but inculcating the virtues of those who first devoted their lives to the duties of that character. He practised what he preached, and enforced his precepts by his example. With him no honest man was a reprobate—no sinner was a saint. Goodness he thought the best sign of grace, and faith he considered as making no amends for immorality.

With all due submission to those reverend persons who take upon them to set the fashions of our faith, it would not be amiss if they were a little more influenced by these principles. It would, I conceive, contribute to the peace, with-

out diminishing the piety of the world, if they would be content to persuade rather than to persecute; if they would not think it necessary,—

“To seize the avenging rod,
Re-judge his judgment, be the God of God;”

but leave those errors of credulity and incredulity which Heaven appears not to visit with any peculiar penalties in this world, to that punishment which they have the satisfaction to know will so infallibly overtake them in the next. In short, if all priests were like Father Clancy, all religions would be more like Christianity; and we should not think it piety to hate and persecute each other “for the love of God.”

When last I beheld this good man officiating at his rustic altar, the service was terminated by a proceeding which struck me as peculiarly characteristic of the state of the Catholic church and its clergy in Ireland. I had often before, at an early period of my life, been present on similar occasions, without experiencing any surprise, or considering the matter as out of the ordinary course. Long absence from the scene, however,

some observation and much reflection, led me to regard it now with different feelings ; and it appeared to me as extraordinary as if I witnessed it for the first time.

At the close of a plain, appropriate, and impressive discourse on the love of our neighbour, delivered from the altar, (for the chapel boasted not a pulpit) in the course of which, the preacher took occasion to warn his flock with great energy, against taking any part in the disturbances which at that time agitated a neighbouring district, he, after a pause, and with some appearance of hesitation and embarrassment, addressed the congregation in nearly the following words :—

“ My good friends ! I am sorry to tell you matters run so low with your priest, that he finds himself under the necessity of having recourse to your assistance. It is some satisfaction to me, however, to reflect, that a longer period than usual has elapsed since I last troubled you. You know I now do duty in two chapels separated by a distance of five miles. I have, besides, many stations to attend in remote parts of this large parish ; and I hope I may say, that you always find me ready,

early or late, to perform the offices of religion and humanity whenever I am called. As to my own wants, they are few, and easily supplied through your kindness ; but I must provide, also, for the poor beast that safely carries me from place to place, in your service. My good people ! I am well aware of your necessities ; and sorry should I be to press upon those who are themselves distressed ; but some there are amongst you, to whom Providence has dealt out the goods of this life, with a less sparing hand, and they will not be backward with their contributions, when they know that by such means only, can I be enabled to perform those duties in which your interests are so much more concerned than mine."

This simple appeal was hardly concluded, when a voice from the lower end of the chapel cried out :—" I'll give you a load of hay, sir."

" Thank you, Paddy Farrell !" said the priest, " thank you ; you are always ready."

" I'll give you a barrel of oats, sir ;" exclaimed another voice from a different quarter.

" Thank you kindly, Loughlin Kenny ; you have the more merit, for I fear you can but ill afford it."

“ I’ll give you a load of straw, sir,” said a third; “ A sack of potatoes,” said a fourth; and so on, with sundry other small donations from different contributors, each drawing some appropriate acknowledgment from the worthy priest, till he signified that he would *not then trespass* farther on their kindness.

During this scene, I observed the old squire of the Castle taking a scrap of paper from his pocket; and having written something on it with a pencil, he delivered it to one of the boys who served mass, whom he had beckoned to receive it. The boy immediately handed it to the priest, who, when he had read it, turned round, and bowing to the pew of “ the family ” said :—“ God Almighty bless you, Mr. Oldcourt, and your worthy family ! On this, as well as on every other occasion, I have good cause to acknowledge your liberality.”

“ And thus it is,” said I to myself, “ that a Christian minister of the ancient church of Ireland—a scholar and a gentleman—is obliged, in his own country, to solicit the means of subsistence ! By this humiliating, this almost mendi-

cant process, the most pious, exemplary, laborious, and useful body of clergy, that ever expounded the principles or enforced the duties of any church, are sustained and rewarded for the zeal and disinterestedness with which they devote themselves to the service of their religion and their country! While a church, whose pastors may be said, comparatively, to have no flocks—while a clergy, without a laity, who have cures without cares, and dues without duties—while, in short, an establishment which is hostile to the feelings, principles, and prejudices of the great body of the people, and which exists for them only in its exactions, its insults, and its persecutions, is invested with pomp and privilege—loaded with honours and emoluments, beyond all precedent of princely endowment or ecclesiastical remuneration.*”

* Extract from a speech of Lord Ebrington's, at the Devonshire Anti-Catholic Meeting.—*Times Newspaper*, January 19th, 1829.—

“ His own parish, in Ireland—and there were hundreds of others similarly situated—presented an instance of a Protestant clergyman without a church; without a parson-

But these (as Mr. Burke says) are "high matters," and above my sphere. The arcana of state policy are not to be discovered by the profane; and every one knows that common sense, common justice, and common honesty, are no rule, *lorsqu'il s'agit des grandes affaires*. Let me return, therefore, to the concerns of the Oldcourt family.

On the day when the proceeding which I have just described, took place, an event also occurred at the close of the ceremony, which, in its consequences, materially influenced the fate of one of the most interesting members of that ancient house.

As the congregation were about to quit the chapel, considerable disturbance was observed to prevail amongst those who carried on their devo-

age, or a single Protestant inhabitant; except when his (Lord Ebrington's) own family resided there. He did not believe that such a state of things could be acceptable to the clergy of England; or, that they could wish to embark in the same boat with their Irish brethren; and if the Irish clergy were only known to their parishioners by the exaction of their tithes, their absence was, perhaps, better than their presence among them, when they had no duty to perform."

tions on the outside of it. The confusion appeared to be occasioned by an accident. A gentleman in a military garb had been thrown from his horse near one of the doors, and was so stunned by the fall as to be apparently quite insensible. He was attended by a friend, who, much agitated, and evidently in some alarm, endeavoured to keep off the crowd, which pressed so close as to obstruct the circulation of air.

With that alacrity of kindness which characterizes the peasantry of Ireland, all parties rushed forward with suggestions of relief or remedy, and, by their eagerness, increased the confusion.

“Blood-an’-ouns! boys, stand back!” cried a man who had raised the sufferer from the ground, and supported his head upon his knee. “Stand back! I tell you, and don’t be smotherin’ us up here.”

“His black stock is a-chokin’ him,” said another, who immediately began to loosen it; while some of those around opened the stranger’s hands, and smartly slapped them with their own,

as a generally received means of restoring animation.

“ Hadn’t you better bring the gentleman into the chapel ? ” said one of the by-standers. “ Sprinkle his face with a little holy water, ” cried another.

“ It ’ill do him no good, Pat Flanagan, ” said a young man, who had looked on with much less interest than the rest. “ He has no belief in it; an’ it’s but a judgment on him. ”

“ Unfeeling ruffian ! ” cried the gentleman’s friend, seizing the speaker by the collar, with great indignation ; and, as the latter instantly grappled with his assailant, there would have been an immediate fray, if the presence of Mr. Oldcourt, his sons, and Father Clancy, who had now approached from the chapel, had not prevented further violence.

In the companion of the young officer, who still seemed unconscious of what passed around him, the old squire recognised Major Ogle, a gentleman of the county, who resided a few miles from the castle, and with whom he was upon such terms of acquaintance, as at that

period usually subsisted between the supercilious Protestant grandee, and the resentful popish squire. The present, however, was an occasion upon which the spirit of human kindness overcame all other feelings, and the members of the Oldcourt family were anxious only to discover in what way they could be most useful to a suffering fellow-creature.

To Mr. Oldcourt's inquiries as to the cause of the accident, Major Ogle, in a somewhat vague and embarrassed manner, replied, that his friend's horse had started, reared, and fallen back, crushing his rider severely under him. As immediate assistance appeared essential, and the strangers were at a considerable distance from home, the Oldcourts insisted that they should proceed to the castle, which was not half a mile from the chapel; and directed the sufferer to be placed in their carriage for the easier removal, as the ladies could walk that short distance without inconvenience. Major Ogle reluctantly acquiesced in this arrangement, as he began to be seriously alarmed for the situation of his friend, and went himself in the carriage to

take charge of him. In this office he was assisted by Barry Oldcourt, the eldest son, to whom, on their way, he communicated that his companion was Sir Walter D'Arcy, a young baronet who had lately come into the possession of a handsome fortune, and was now quartered with part of his regiment in Galway.

As the carriage moved slowly, the whole party arrived at the same time, and the patient was with the greatest care and kindness placed in a room which was immediately appropriated to his use. He had by this time recovered his consciousness, but had no recollection of what had occurred; and appeared to suffer so much pain, that Mrs. Oldcourt, the highest medical authority in the parish, declared she would not answer for the consequences if he were not bled immediately. The good lady was in her element, and anxiously produced her whole store of balsams for bruises, fomentations for sprains, drops, cordials, and specifics for all imaginable maladies. For the operation of phlebotomy, however, she had no provision, her practice had never extended to the use of the lancet; and as there was no more skill-

ful hand in the neighbourhood, the horse doctor was immediately sent for from the village.

Mr. Phelim McCabe prescribed for the wickie equestrian order in his vicinage; he had an undisputed sway in all quadruped casualties or complaints. No man could, like him, deal with the murrain, the mange, the rot, or the staggers; he could worm a dog, or nick a colt's tail with great dexterity, and was always consulted in cases of splint, spavin, or windgall. His neighbours indeed, looked upon him as a person of very extraordinary acquirements, and were anxious to submit themselves as well as their horses to his management. "When he could do so much for poor dumb creatures, who could'nt spake what ails 'em, they saw no razin why he could'nt cure a Christian with a tongue in his head, to tell his own story."

His various talents were, in short, so highly appreciated, that according to the grateful strain of a humble bard, who it was supposed had benefited by their exercise, he

" Was held in honour next the priest,
For he (with reverence he it spoken,
Could bleed or drench both man and beast,
And set a body's bones when broken."

To say the truth, Mr. Phelim M'Cabe himself, was very willing to strengthen these impressions of his importance. He was by no means satisfied with his renown as the Sangrado of the stable and the dog-kennel. He thought he had good claims to be considered the Esculapius of the whole district; and on more than one occasion, was observed to manifest some jealousy of Mrs. Oldcourt's interference and medical reputation. This feeling it was, which led him to assume a more than ordinary degree of consequence, whenever he was called upon to perform any of his functions at the castle; and when he learned the rank and station of the personage upon whom he was now required to operate, he summoned all his importance to his aid, and resolved to look as wise as any of the faculty.

His appearance, certainly, was not very well calculated to second his intentions in this respect. His figure was clumsy, squat, and what is vulgarly called pot-bellied—his face was broad and bloated, exhibiting two little red eyes, under bushy, grey eye-brows, and half buried beneath his fat and florid cheeks; a short snub nose, always tinged with snuff; a wide mouth, of what in

Ireland is called the potatoe character ; with a peculiar curl at one corner, at once sly and simple—half smirk, half sneer. From this feature a broad, double chin descended, the lower and larger portion of which, loosely encircled by a kind of rope of red handkerchief, reposed upon a brawny chest.

On his head he generally wore a woollen night-cap, not always as clean as could be wished, over which, an old unpowdered wig was carelessly stuck on ; the whole surmounted by a well-worn cocked hat, of the modern coachman's cut, which, when he took it off, commonly brought the wig along with it.

His dress was generally loose and slovenly ; his unmentionables half unbuttoned at the knees, and the folds of his capacious waistcoat always displaying a deposit of Lundy Foote's best, which might furnish him with a supply, should his horn box be exhausted. Over all, he wore, or rather carried, in every season, an old blue great coat attached by one button under his chin, the arms hanging loose and useless behind, in the fashion of a hussar's jacket.

In this, his usual costume, and with more than his ordinary gravity, Mr. Phelim M'Cabe presented himself, according to requisition, at the castle. His introduction for any surgical operation evidently excited some surprise in Major Ogle and his friend; a feeling which his peculiar manner and mode of address was not likely to remove.

"God save all here! No bones broken, my honeys, I hope. Well, accidents will happen on Sundays as well as Mondays." Then, unceremoniously depositing himself on the nearest chair, and taking out his snuff-box, he addressed the baronet, whom he saw reclining with the air of an invalid, on a sofa. "You are the patient, I 'spose, my young sodger?" To this somewhat blunt inquiry, the latter answered only by a supercilious nod of the head.

Major Ogle, who was one of that very numerous class of squires in Ireland, who feel their dignity outraged by any thing like an approach to familiarity, in those whom they consider to be beneath them, was particularly disconcerted by this free and easy style of Mr. Phelim M'Cabe; and, turning to one of the young men of the family,

who had ushered in the veterinary professor, he asked, with an air and emphasis, evidently intended to repress at once such presumptuous bearing,—
“Is this the person whom Mrs. Oldcourt was so good as to propose?” Being answered in the affirmative, he turned to him with great *hauteur* and said, “Are you, my friend, accustomed to officiate on these occasions?”

M’Cabe, who knew the major, and his character, aware of his own present importance, was by no means disposed to be particularly respectful; he replied, therefore, in his usual tone.

“What did you say, agra?”

The question being repeated, with increased importance, he exclaimed,—

“Am I ’customed on these occasions? Well, to be sure, that’s good! Am I ’customed to ate, drink, or sleep? Make yourself aisy, my good sir, and lave me to mind my own business.” Young Mr. Oldcourt here observed, “that Mr. M’Cabe knew very well what he was about.”

“By my sowl, you may say that, Master Barry, with your own purty mouth;” rejoined the

offended medical. "The very best blood in the county has smoked upon my blade, horse and man, any time these thirty years, and doubt nor distrust never fell on Phelim M'Cabe before. But, may be, major," continued he, "you'd like to try your hand yourself; you know we follow pretty much the same trade, only the differ bechune us is, that *you* draw blood to kill, and *I* to cure."

The sly, sarcastic tone of the horse-doctor, evidently exasperated the major; and the more so, as his invalid friend could not suppress a laugh on the occasion. M'Cabe's services, however, were necessary; he, therefore, endeavoured to conceal his displeasure, saying,—

"We want your skill here, sir, and not your conversation."—

"Like enough, ahaguer!" rejoined the doctor; "but 'pon my honour you're out of luck, for they always go together. Besides, I like dearly a little gossip, when I meet an agreeable gentleman like Major Ogle;" (winking sily to those around) "and the divil a harm a little chat with me will do you, major, because, you see, I can

tell you a bit of a sacret which you won't hear every day in the week."

"What do you mean, fellow?" angrily demanded the major.

"Nothing at all, honey," answered our rustic Esculapius, with the most provoking coolness; "only that you are a mighty great man in your own opinion. But, Lord help us! we're all poor mistaken cratures."

The baronet, in spite of his pains and bruises, was so amused with M'Cabe's dry humour, and his friend's mortification, that, bursting into a laugh, he said,—

"Egad! Ogle, you have caught a tartar."

The major, greatly irritated, yet not knowing exactly how to assert himself, addressed the doctor, and angrily desired he would immediately proceed to perform the operation for which his presence there was required.

"Arrah! be asy, honey; you're not in command here, major," observed the doctor; at the same time, quietly unrolling an old black leather case, containing instruments which seemed more calculated to cut off the leg of a horse, than for

any more delicate surgical operation. " Besides," added he, " I have a way of my own of doing these things, and fair and asy goes far in the day. Tim, dear," turning to speak to one of the servants who were in attendance, " ax the mistress for a drop of the crature, just to steady my hand a bit." But Mrs. Oldcourt, who was aware of the accustomed preliminary to any of M'Cabe's performances, at that moment entered the room, with a bottle and glass in her hand.

" My dear madam!" exclaimed the major, " you are not, I hope, going to give this man spirits; the fellow is half tipsy already."

" Good words, major, jewel!" quietly observed M'Cabe, " or may be, I may lave you to bleed your friend yourself. But that is a job, they say, you're 'cute enough at."

This sly allusion to rumours of certain gambling transactions, in which Major Ogle was said to have fleeced some of his associates pretty handsomely, raised that gentleman's choler to the highest pitch. He stammered out some exclamation which passion rendered unintelligible; and there is no saying to what lengths the altercation

might have proceeded, if Mrs. Oldcourt, after filling a bumper for the doctor, had not judiciously interfered, and requested to speak to Major Ogle in the next room, a motion to which that gentleman immediately, and apparently with some alacrity, assented; his unruffled opponent hailing his retreat aloud, with—"My humble sarvice to you, major!" as he tossed off his bumper.

"Upon my word, a very quare, crusty sort of gentleman is that same Mr. *Major* Ogle, as they call him," added M'Cabe, "though I'm sure I can't see why or wherefore. I'd be glad to know, indeed, what made him so great an officer, all of a sudden, unless it be his prancing about upon his long-tail filly, amongst a parcel of spalpeens who call themselves yeomanry cavillers; but I believe I made him lave that, as the gauger said, when he shot at the crow, 'marry, come up, my dirty cousin!' Why, you'd think I was no more nor the dirt under his feet, though there's not a horse in his stable but has good rason to know Phelim M'Cabe; but his mare may have the staggers, and himself too, for me, any how, after this bout. But come, my young gentleman, now that we've

pace and quiet again, we'll soon settle our business, and don't you be afeard of me. I have drawn more blood in my time than the major, great a warrior as he is."

The baronet, who, though bruised a little, and in some pain, was by no means seriously affected by his fall, had been greatly entertained by the oddity before him; he held out his arm immediately to M'Cabe, assured him he had no fears, and that he placed the utmost reliance on his skill.

"Faith! and that you may, honey," rejoined the doctor, well pleased with the confidence reposed in him by his patient; "and a mighty pretty vein," baring the arm, "as a body might wish to see. Stand out of that, Master Barry, dear! for it 'ill spout out famously, I'll be bound." The event quickly realized his prophecy, and exultingly he exclaimed, "there, by the piper of Blessington! Pat Daise himself never did a nater bit of phlebotomy."

Now, as the gentleman mentioned by the familiar designation of Pat Daise, was the most celebrated surgeon at that time in Ireland, nothing further in the way of panegyric could be at-

tempted. M'Cabe really, in the humbler operations of surgery, had a good deal of experience, and no small dexterity. As soon as he had tied up the arm, a little of his jealous feeling on the subject of Mrs. Oldcourt's interference, in what he considered his department, broke out.

"Now, if I understand any thing of shaving a pig," said he, "there was no great call for this job, seeing that all's safe and sound in a whole skin; but the mistress knows best, and I'm sure I'm always willin to give up my poor judgment; but there is no great harm done any how, and if you keep quiet for this blessed day, my young gentleman, the divil a bit you'll want either stupes, possets, or cordials, and that's all I say; and so I'll take my lave, because you see, there's a patient waiting for me in the stable."

The baronet's horse, however, was found, on examination, to have suffered still less from his fall than his master:

CHAPTER XI.

WALTER MAURICE D'ARCY, at the age of twenty-eight years, succeeded, on the death of his father, to the possession of a property which had once been sufficient for the establishment of a prince. Through the operation, however, of that arithmetical process, in which the heads of ancient families in Ireland have always shown themselves great adepts—reduction, it was gradually brought within moderate limits; and the negligence of the late possessor, followed up by the extravagance of the present, had contributed not only to squander their due proportion of the family estate, but also very much to encumber what remained. The grandfather of the gentleman whom we have in the last chapter introduced

to the reader, had been a zealous adherent of the Stuarts. Influenced by what is called loyalty, a very heroic virtue in the estimation of those who are its idols, and which, in its highest perfection, appears to be a blind, unquestioning, unhesitating, and unconditional devotion to a king, *quand même*, as Monsieur de Chateaubriand says, that is, in plain English, even though he were found to be the tyrant rather than the protector of his country; even though he were, as in the instance alluded to, as weak, as worthless, and as ungrateful a prince as ever proved to the fortunate conviction of the world, that the assumption of divine right is blasphemy in a king, and the practice of passive obedience, baseness in a people.

Influenced by this political superstition, to which so many noble natures have fallen a sacrifice, and from the victims to which, in Ireland alone, a book of martyrs might be formed to rival the religious romance under that name, which has been composed for the great edification of puritanical zeal and orthodox credu-

lity ; stimulated by this chivalrous devotion to that

“ Divinity which doth hedge a king,”

Sir Gerald D’Arcy embraced, with enthusiasm, the cause of the Stuarts. He raised a regiment amongst his own tenants, and continued to lead them gallantly in the field, till the war of the revolution closed in the capitulation of Limerick. He and his followers formed part of the garrison of that fortress ; and when it was surrendered by treaty to the British force, under Ginkle, D’Arcy was so disgusted by the pusillanimity of James, and so hopeless of any farther effort in his favour, that he was one of the few Irish officers who accepted the offer to be received, with the same rank, into the service of King William.

In this proceeding, however, he had the mortification to find himself deserted by his regiment, not a man of which could be prevailed upon to follow his example ; neither could they be induced to join those who agreed to pass over to the Continent in the service of France. They laid aside their swords, as there was no longer a banner under which

they could continue to fight for their country, and retired to their homes to lament her subjugation.

As a colonel without a regiment is no great acquisition to an army, D'Arcy soon found himself treated with neglect and indifference by the British commander. He, therefore, took the first opportunity to withdraw entirely from the service. For many years he lived in great privacy, consoling himself with the reflection, that he had rescued his estate from the grasp of the commissioners for claims, though he never entirely recovered the respect of his tenants, who could not forgive his having consented to unite with those whom they considered as the enemies of their king, their creed, and their country.

Sir Gerald was in due time succeeded by his only son, Sir Patrick Brown D'Arcy; a young gentleman, who, having before his accession to the family honours, established for himself the character of a fine jolly fellow, who would hunt, or shoot, or drink, or fight with any man of his inches from Ireland's eye to the Giant's Causeway, soon invested the name of D'Arcy with that popu-

larity, the loss of which was said to have shortened the days of his predecessor. Sir Patrick, indeed, continued for some years to riot in the full enjoyment of what the squirearchy of that period were in the habit of considering the *acme* of rural felicity. His life was an uninterrupted carousal—divided between out-door sports and in-door revelries.

In the midst of this joyous career, however, his health and his fortune manifested such startling symptoms of decay, as led him to suspect that the pleasures which he pursued, and the species of renown which he had achieved, might possibly be purchased at such a price as would leave him little room to exult in his bargain. A violent fit of the gout, which left him for six months without a leg to stand on, and a process of law, which but for the timely interference of a friend, would have left him in still less time without a house to live in, seasonably combined to bring him to his senses as to the final result of his convivialities.

A sick chamber affords a fine opportunity for reflection; its atmosphere is generally fatal to folly and vanity, and the glare of the world cannot penetrate its gloom. The companions of our revels

are seldom anxious to obtrude on its seclusion, or desirous to disturb our meditations. The baronet, during his long confinement, was left to the full enjoyment of his cogitations; and they led him to form a very prudent resolution, to turn over a new leaf, and endeavour to recruit his fortune and his constitution, before either was too far gone to admit of a remedy.

As he, like most of his class, however, had never contemplated the possibility of being required to be useful in his generation, so he was much better qualified to impair a property than to repair it. It became matter of some consideration with him, therefore, in what manner he could most successfully operate for the attainment of the latter object, as he could not but perceive his genius did not lie that way.

When a man does not exactly know what to do with himself, or for what he is fit—when his talents are such occult qualities in his composition, that he himself has never been able to find them out, he generally begins to think, that a snug place under government would suit him to a hair. He has no misgivings as to his own capacity for filling any

station to which he might be appointed. However modest he may be as to his pretensions to be a good carpenter, a good shoemaker, or a good tailor; however inadequate he may have found himself to the management of his own affairs, he never doubts that he is competent to the business of the public in all its branches. From the Treasury Board down to the Board of Green Cloth, —from the Secretary of State's office down to the post office and the police offices, there is no function of state, ministerial, magisterial, or diplomatic, which he is not ready to undertake, and for which he does not consider himself duly qualified. As he has neither the inclination, nor the ability to draw a comfortable provision from other sources, he thinks he has a claim to quarter himself on the public; and thus it is, that the idle, the worthless, and the useless, are always the most importunate, and too often the most successful applicants for those appointments, which ought to be conferred on effective talent and ascertained integrity.

To our worthy baronet, as to most other landed gentlemen, who find themselves a little out at the

elbow, the possibility of an advantageous connexion with the powers that be, did not fail to occur, as at once the shortest and most agreeable mode of recruiting his finances. As he was a man of some consequence in his county, he thought that by making himself useful, as the phrase is, to the government, or in other words, becoming the ready tool of authority, he might so far recommend himself, as to come in for a share of the loaves and fishes; and having squandered his property as a country squire, he had no objection to scrape it together again in the character of a court sycophant. There was, however, one little impediment in his way;—the brand of popery was strong upon him. But as he had very little religion and still less principle, this obstacle was speedily removed. He did not hesitate to conform, at least outwardly, to the established faith.

The defection of a man of his rank and station, from the ancient creed of his country, it may be supposed, excited much surprise and some regret amongst those whom he had deserted. As his family, however, remained firm to their religion, and evidently favoured the impression that con-

venience rather than conviction had dictated his conversion, it was not regarded with so much indignation as would have been otherwise bestowed upon it. But whatever might have been his own dispositions on the subject, he soon found that to derive any advantage from the change, he must display something more than a lukewarm zeal for the establishment.

Such was the religious rancour which prevailed at that day, and which the benevolent labours of the saints and biblicals of the present, are so piously directed to revive, that it was not enough to profess Protestantism, you must show yourself ready to persecute popery. To declare that you believed the doctrines of the new church to be pure, rational, and divine, would gain you no credit, unless you were prepared to assert and swear too, (if you hoped to get any thing by your conformity) that the doctrines of the old church were detestable, idolatrous, and damnable,—a monstrous system of fraud, folly, and superstition, which every pious disciple of the establishment was bound to visit with all sorts of pains and penalties here, lest heaven should forget to punish it hereafter.

As the theological opinions of our worthy baronet were but little influenced by the new name under which he thought proper to profess them, and as the only change which ever appeared in them consisted in this, that having very little religion as a Papist, he had still less as a Protestant, so he determined that no squeamishness on his part should detract from the merit of his apostasy, or interfere to obstruct the advantages which he hoped to derive from it.

To prove his sincerity, therefore, and obtain an opportunity to signalize his zeal, he repaired to the metropolis, became a diligent dangler at the Castle, and was amongst the loudest at civic feasts, in toasting the loyal sentiments of that day,—“Confusion to the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender!”

As a convert of his rank, and one of the ancient race, was considered of some consequence, he received many encouraging smiles and gracious nods from persons in authority. He was placed in the commission of the peace, and it was hinted, that if he worked his interest in his county, and

threw it into the proper scale, there was no saying what might be the consequence.

There was a difficulty in the way here, however, which the baronet's alacrity in the service of his new friends, and as he hoped of himself, could not easily overcome. His tenants were all Papists, and consequently incapable of rendering him any political service. For this evil there was but one remedy; he must get rid of his Papist population,* and replace them by Protestants, if he could find them, whose votes could give him that sort of importance which he hoped might answer his purpose.

The expedient, to be sure, was rather harsh, and somewhat ungracious in the representative of a family, which had, through so many generations, distinguished themselves as the champions of their country and its creed. But there was no alternative, and if he had any qualms, he took care to suppress them. A general election was approaching, and the minister, he could perceive, notwith-

* The elective franchise had not been conceded at this time to the Catholics.

standing his zeal for the church, had very little respect for those votaries of the establishment, who did not bring votes along with them.

The general discredit, also, into which he had fallen amongst the peasantry, and the epithets, "turncoat" and "renegade," which, in audible whispers, occasionally reached his orthodox ears, made him less reluctant to adopt a measure to which, though at first prompted by policy alone, he was now spurred on by resentment. And after all, of what consequence are the homes, the comforts, or even the existence of wretches, living in misery and mud cabins, when compared with the important object of a landholder, making the most of his property, and recommending himself to those who have honours and emoluments to bestow in return for political subserviency and prostitution?

Expulsion, therefore, was the order of the day; and whole families were driven from the roofs that had sheltered them and their forefathers for ages.

As the unhappy victims to this benevolent exercise of the rights of property, could not be

entirely convinced that it was conformable to the laws of nature, justice, or humanity; and as they were not all content to beg and starve in peace and quietness, for the accommodation of the squire and his new settlers—although they had

“ All the world before them where to choose ”—

it was, perhaps, not very wonderful, that some of these forlorn outcasts should put their houseless heads together, and united by the sympathies of wrong and resentment, concert schemes of revenge, at least, if not of redress; indulging in a few occasional manifestations of their dissatisfaction, such as burning hay-stacks, tarring and feathering, with other unruly proceedings, expressive of the very audacious sentiment, that they had some little claim to subsistence, and that the country which gave them birth, should also give them bread,—or potatoes at least, which have long been the bread of Irishmen.

It was now that “ the magistrate ” came forth in all his terrors—that the baronet raged and railed against *White Boys*, and *Right Boys*, and showed himself a worthy co-operator with that wise and

enlightened body of political Sangrados, who bleed the patient whenever he complains; who attack the symptoms, instead of the disease, and affect to cure the most dangerous disorders, without removing the causes in which they originate.

Provoked by the obstacles thus thrown in the way of his plan for "working his interest in the county," and exasperated by the detestation which his conduct excited in all around him, he soon became distinguished amongst even the most violent conservators of the peace, and took care, by a vigilant severity of persecution, to create materials for tumult where he did not find them.

If a shilelah were flourished at a fair, the people were forcibly dispersed under pretence of an insurrection; he detected the systematic musterings of revolt in a fray or a foot-ball match; plots and conspiracies were hatched at every country wake; and every well attended funeral of the lower orders was to be interrupted, or attacked, as an organized array of treason and rebellion.

He declaimed with all the energy of a modern Orangeman, at Quarter Sessions, against the ma-

chinations of Popery and priestcraft; deplored the barbarism of a country in which a gentleman could not be allowed to do what he pleased with his own property, and called for new powers of oppression and persecution, against those lawless wretches, who would disturb a landlord in the laudable project of thinning the population on his estate, to render it more profitable, and dislodging a whole district of its inhabitants, to convert it into a sheep-walk.

Sustained at first by the fury of his zeal, he seemed to find a pleasure in sharpening the edge, and urging the application of every penal enactment; but at length, he began to discover that the task of "working his interest in the county," was attended with a great deal of trouble, and some danger.

Notwithstanding the discipline of shooting, hanging, and transporting, with which his doctrines of political economy were enforced, they made no way with the people, who continued perversely to believe that the poor as well as the rich have a right to live; and that they, whose labours draw forth the treasures of the soil, have

by every law, natural, social, and divine, as strong a claim to share in its produce, as the noble and the squire, the parson and the tithe-proctor.

They maintained, also, with such desperate obstinacy, their side of the controversy, against all the odds of power and authority, that although our worthy baronet had the magistracy at his back, and the military at his command, he thought it prudent to retire for a while, to avoid the possibility of dangers, from which he was led to fear that neither the one nor the other could effectually secure him.

His countrymen, he knew, were as ardent in their hatred as their love; and he who had deservedly forfeited the one, had always good reason to apprehend the consequences of the other. Sensitive minds are never quiescent under a sense of injustice and oppression. The wrongs they cannot hope to redress, they are always the most sure to resent; for the fever of desperation is ever accompanied by the thirst of revenge.

In the metropolis, therefore, the baronet determined, for a time, to consult his safety, and conceal his mortification, hoping also, that he might work his interest more successfully at court, than he had done in the country.

The rumour of his zeal in the cause of the ascendancy had, however, recommended him at the Castle ; he took care to second the impression by calumniating, on all occasions, the people whom he had betrayed, and courting sedulously the favour of that mongrel race—half English, half Irish, who, possessing the virtues of neither, contrive to unite the vices of both, and are content to be the sycophants of the one country, that they may be the tyrants of the other.

In order, also, more decisively to mark his intention of weaning his family from their attachment to all those ancient habits, feelings, and prejudices, which constitute the endearing idea of country, he determined to send his son to complete his education at Oxford ; aware that in the University of Dublin, some sympathy with the interests of his native land might be encouraged to linger in his breast, and impede his ad-

vancement, under a system which was founded on their violation.

The young gentleman in question, Master Walter Maurice D'Arcy, was at this period about fifteen years of age, very handsome in person, and what is commonly called a fine spirited boy; that is, he was bold, mischievous, and unmanageable. Though not very forward in his studies, he was foremost in all those pranks in which the schoolboys of that period were disposed to signalize their prowess. He was always the first to go out of bounds; he was the prime promoter of all barrings out and rebellions, and the leader of every row with the *snoobs* of the neighbouring villages.

But if he was violent, he was not revengeful. When he stirred up a fray, he was himself always in the front of the battle. He never shrunk from the consequences of his proceedings—never denied his share in them, or sought to exculpate himself, by casting the blame from his own shoulders. He rather endeavoured to screen those from punishment, whom his persuasion or his example had seduced into offence. If he had been in

good hands, he might have been courageous, generous, and just. The system under which he was educated, or rather I should say, neglected, allowed him to become daring, headstrong, and unprincipled.

In the ethics of a public school, there is no immorality in mischief, and I am sorry to say, there is very little merit in morality. To riot appears to be the first, to revel the next, and to learn, the last duty that is observed in those celebrated seminaries which come under that description. A knowledge of the classics may be obtained there, by those who would acquire it any where; but the most important objects of education, morals, manners, and accomplishments, are extra's, and not in the bond.

There are few establishments in the country, in which I should think a revision of the system pursued, would be attended with more advantage, than in those little communities where the rising race are to acquire the qualities which must distinguish them as statesmen and legislators—as citizens and subjects. The commissioners for the education inquiry might not injudiciously ex-

tend their investigations to this side of the water, and peep into Westminster as well as Maynooth ; devote a few moments to the Charter-House, as well as to the Charter Schools ; and examine the manner in which they

“ Teach the young idea how to shoot,”

at Eton, Harrow, and Winchester, as well as at the Belfast Academical Institution.

The characters of most men may be said to be formed at school : there the seeds are sown, which afterwards vegetate to vice or virtue ; there the passions are first awakened in the young mind ; its principles are first endangered, and its propensities first established.

Every man whose education has given him an opportunity to make the observation, will recollect what were his feelings, when, as a boy, with the impressions of religion and morality imbibed in the domestic circle, strong upon him, he was first turned loose into the riotous arena of a great school, to mingle in the unruly contentions of those who may be termed the little savages of civilization. How strange and startling the

scene! and what a shock to all his notions! how soon does the associate of the play-ground become enlightened, out of school at least, if not in it! The film of ignorance is speedily removed as to vice, if not as to knowledge. The best disposition—the purest principles, cannot stand against the storm of ridicule, or remain steady within the influence of example. He first wonders—next hesitates, and then imitates.

With what a different view of life does he return to the parental roof in his first vacation! How he laughs at the simplicity of his former domestic companions, as he consequentially communicates to their startled curiosity, the proficiency he has made in the manly disregard of nursery notions, and all that he has learned in this, his first lesson in “the knowledge of the world.”

That the process by which man is to be prepared for the performance of the various duties of society,—that the nature of the moulds in which the minds of the rising generation must be cast, should excite so little interest amongst parents, and so little inquiry in the public at large,

is, perhaps, somewhat extraordinary. It seems not very consistent with the spirit of the age, that the great art of education should be the only art which is allowed to stand still, while all others *keep moving* in the general march of mind;— that the spur of improvement which may be said to be rowel deep in all the interests and occupations of life, should not be applied to that great object, upon the rational management of which, the welfare of the whole depends.

Whatever was the process of education adopted in the intellectual nursery in which young D'Arcy was placed, it was not very well calculated for the judicious cultivation of his faculties. His powers were naturally good, but they were neglected. A vigorous constitution, and an energetic spirit were suffered to run riot, till irregularity became an uncontrollable habit; and, to speak craniologically, his organs of mischief and mutiny were developed with an activity so inconvenient to the peace and discipline of the establishment, that his father received a hint which led him to supersede, by his son's removal, the necessity of his expulsion.

CHAPTER XII.

THE University of Oxford, at the period when Walter Maurice D'Arcy became a member of it, was not (according to some unexceptionable authorities) the very best place to which a young gentleman of his peculiar turn, could be sent to pursue his studies.

He was said to have been contemporary there with Gibbon ; but that statement I should think, on a comparison of dates, must be erroneous. It certainly does not appear that they were associated, either in their studies, or their sports ; that they ever read, rioted, or revelled in the same set ; although it must be confessed, that in morals, manners, and literature, our hero shared in all those advantages, for which the historian

of the Roman empire has so eloquently recorded his gratitude to his *Alma Mater*.

At Oxford, young D'Arcy soon found himself in his element ; and was gratified to perceive, that the qualities which had rendered him conspicuous at school, were not likely to be discouraged at college, and might there be exercised upon a much larger scale.

Before he was six months' resident, he had obtained that ascendancy amongst his companions, which daring spirits always assume over common minds, and was consulted, and considered as a leader in that warfare with proctors, bursars and beadles, against order, discipline, and erudition, which, in those retreats of science and somnolence, so often ruffles the pillows of academic dignitaries.—

“ While heads of houses from their slumbers wake,
And towers and halls with college thunders shake.”

When he had overcome the preliminary objections to his brogue and his country, and had proved, by the summary process, which is usually resorted to on such occasions, that it was not al-

together safe to take such liberties with either, as the genuine John Bull, of every degree, is always disposed to indulge in, he became a general favourite. He was even received as an acquisition to their symposia, by that class of students, who look upon their residence at the University, as the first stage in the journey of enjoyment, which, as far as they are concerned, they hold themselves privileged to consider human life.

His vivacity and spirit gave a new zest to their irregularities; and he manœuvred the war against college authorities so skilfully, that, though those conservators of cloister decorum were generally on the alert, they were often foiled in their efforts to repress the disorders which were conducted according to his tactics, or to detect the delinquents that were engaged in them.

As to his studies, it may be supposed, that the course which he pursued was not very favourable to their advancement. His scholastic reputation was by no means in proportion to his convivial celebrity. With powers which would have enabled him to attain the highest honours of the University, if he had been disposed to contend

for them, it was his ambition to be considered the cleverest in evading every duty, and the boldest in violating every regulation of his college. To be the most intrepid in riot, thoughtless in dissipation, and reckless in expense, was the only triumph which he sought for; and though he had many competitors in this career, he was always *double first*, or *senior optime*.

But his labours in this way, though generally successful, as far as his *fame* was concerned, were not always safe. The devices of his ingenuity did not always secure him against the proctor's vigilance. The effects of a frolic or a row, were sometimes to be traced in characters of personal disfigurement, which could be neither concealed, nor misunderstood; and some sallies of gallantry beyond the boundaries of college decorum, were productive of results which embarrassed our academic Lothario, through several years of his life.

The old baronet, also, began to find, by many awkward hints, and importunate applications, that the residence of a high-spirited young gentleman-commoner, at Oxford, was attended with

an expense upon which he had not calculated, and for which he was not very well prepared. As he was not solicitous that his son should distinguish himself in any studies but those which would advance his interest at the Castle; and as his aim in sending him to Oxford, was to pay homage to the ruling faction in Ireland, and show his desire to *Anglify* his family, in the person of his heir, he thought these objects were now sufficiently attained.

After he had gone through the usual routine of fines, impositions, and rustications, it was thought prudent, therefore, to withdraw Mr. Walter Maurice D'Arcy from the University of which he had been so active a member, as quietly as possible, without waiting for the ceremony of a degree.

He had remained long enough at Oxford, however, to become *Anglified* in the superficial manners, though not in the solid worth which might recommend the transformation thus expressed. He had lost his brogue and his patriotism—had learned to forget the interests, and disregard the feelings of his native land—had en-

grafted some of the vices of this country, on the Hibernian stock, and worked up the raw materials of Irish impudence, into the hard, cold, and callous temperament of English effrontery.

I have often thought, that it would be no unentertaining subject of inquiry, to investigate the different modes and degrees in which, that very serviceable quality, called impudence, is most generally developed, in the national character of the two countries. By all parties, at this side of St. George's Channel, the sons of the shamrock have been usually complimented, both in poetry and prose, with an undisputed pre-eminence in "matchless intrepidity of face."

*"Hibernia famed, 'bove every other grace,
For matchless intrepidity of face."*

But this polite concession of national superiority, on the part of John Bull, will not be so readily acquiesced in, by those who are best acquainted with his merits; and it can be considered, only, as a proof of the characteristic modesty, with which he always compares himself with his neighbours.

Impartial observation would, perhaps, find it difficult to say, which should bear the palm ; or might, in the language of Dryden's Ode, decree, that " both divide the crown ; " as considering that each possesses, in an equal degree, the quality in question, and differs only, in the peculiar mode in which it is exemplified.

The impudence of an Irishman is generally rash, swaggering, and ostentatious ; imposing in its ease, and often imprudent in its exercise : not so much resulting from a confidence in his pretensions, as from a happy mixture of *étourderie* and indiscretion.

He is ashamed to be modest, because he considers diffidence as a kind of cowardice, and braces his nerves for the drawing-room, as well as for the field. The impudence of an Englishman, on the other hand, is cool, quiet, and determined—silent, sulky, and unimpressible ; resulting from a perfect satisfaction with himself, and every thing that belongs to him, as well as a perfect conviction, that his superiority to the rest of the world can neither be doubted or denied.

The unruffled aspect of his assurance, might

lead you to suppose its dullness was diffidence, if the uncivil assumptions of his arrogance did not soon convince you of your mistake.

An Irishman is impudent through fun, through folly, through knavery;—an Englishman is impudent from pride, from presumption, and ill-manners. The impudence of an Irishman is often lively, eccentric, and entertaining;—the impudence of an Englishman is always heavy, phlegmatic, and offensive. The most impudent Irishman may be disconcerted, and put out of countenance; there are always some vulnerable points about him, where you can touch him to the quick: but an impudent Englishman, is not to be abashed by mortal means; he has a husk around him that nothing can penetrate; his effrontery is as cool and determined as his courage; and you can no more make him ashamed than afraid.

But, though the character of John Bull is by no means deficient in bronze, and he can “shine in brass,” as well as his neighbour, it may possibly be observed, that it is a mental currency not so much in circulation here, nor so generally mixed up with the national manners as it is con-

sidered to be amongst the children of Erin. But this I apprehend to be a small mistake, which a definition of our terms cannot fail to remove.

Impudence, from its derivation, and according to the best lexicographic authority, means shamelessness; that quality of mind, which prompts, and enables us, unblushingly, to deviate from the established decorums of society; which leads us to be rudely regardless of the interests, feelings, and prejudices of other people. It is in manners, what profligacy is in morals; the one arises from the want of feeling, as the other results from the want of principle.

If this definition be just, it follows, that a highly susceptible people are not likely to be conspicuous for their effrontery. They may, under strong excitement, occasionally outrage the conventional manners of society, but they will not habitually transgress them. The Hibernians are universally acknowledged to be a sensitive and impassioned race; but I have yet to learn, that such a character has been ascribed to the English people. John Bull himself, indeed, though strikingly unreserved in the admission of

his own merits, does not appear to take credit for sensibility, as one of his peculiar characteristics. Whatever other superiorities he may lay claim to over his brother Pat, if he were seriously to assume, in addition, the reputation of a higher sense of honour—a more quick and lively feeling of insult or indignity, and, consequently, a more sensitive apprehension of disgrace or shame, he would only prove, that “matchless intrepidity of face,” is a quality not confined to the national physiognomy of the sister kingdom.

The Irish, I apprehend, are not more generally impudent than the English, but they are generally less awkward; they have not less modesty, but they have more manner. An Irishman is more at his ease in society than an Englishman; he sooner acquires *l'usage du monde*; he is a more malleable material on the anvil, and more readily fashioned into any civil shape. He is no self-worshipper, in the sulky solitude of pride; feeding on his own incense—no national Narcissus, admiring himself in the stream of his own thoughts. He requires no sacrifices to his

peculiarities—no homage to his self-importance—no attention which he is not willing to repay. He considers the feast of life as a social pic-nic, where every guest must endeavour to ensure his own welcome, by contributing his quota to the general entertainment, and doing every thing he can to make himself agreeable to the company.

The Irish people, indeed, differ from the English to a degree that seems quite extraordinary, when the long and intimate connexion which has subsisted between them, is considered. To be sure, the nature of their intercourse has not been well calculated to blend or soften the harsh lines of national demarkation. They have been, unfortunately, connected more by associations of repulsion than attraction; they have been rather tied together than united. Thus it is, that the elements of each people have been mixed without mingling, and that the characters of their progenitors may be, at the present day, traced in their descendants, through all the modifications which time and circumstance, the assimilating powers of law, language, manners, and govern-

ment, have conspired to produce. They are, not only morally, but physically a distinct race. They differ in figure, feature, and complexion. The Irishman is looser-limbed, more active, more alert. An experienced drill-sergeant will tell you, how much sooner an Irish bog-trotter can be converted into a soldier, than an English boor—how much more military aptitude he discovers, in his manner of handling a musket, a sword, or a pike. An officer who has seen much service, will acknowledge, how much more lively the Irish soldier is in his movements upon a march; how much more patient he is of fatigue, and cheerful under privation. It is no exaggeration to say of him, that no man can be found in any state of society, who will fight or work, with more alacrity, on an empty stomach.

There is a muscular elasticity about the Irish, which seems peculiarly to fit them for all athletic exercises; in dancing or fencing, in running or wrestling, hand-ball, foot-ball, or hurling, they are always conspicuous, whenever these pursuits excite their attention, or their emulation. The dexterity of a spalpeen, with his shilelah, would

puzzle a professor of the art of defence, at the *salle des armes*. Even in boxing, the peculiar boast of Englishmen, although their impetuosity of temper renders the Irish almost incapable of that cool exertion of skill, which such a species of combat requires, yet the triumphs of Corcoran, in the school of Broughton, and the laurels of Donnelly, Randall, and O'Brien, among the milling champions of the present day, sufficiently attest their pugilistic powers.

In the qualities of mind, the two nations seem to differ still more decidedly, than in those of the body. The Irishman is warm, open, and impetuous; the Englishman is cool, cautious, and reserved. The former is lively, volatile, and unsteady; the latter is grave, deliberate, and determined. The passions of the Irishman are more easily roused, but they are also more easily allayed. His fire is sooner kindled, and blazes more fiercely while it lasts; but the fire of the Englishman burns longer, and does not emit so much smoke.

The Irishman is more enthusiastic in his attachments than the Englishman, but not so

steady. As a companion he is more agreeable, but not so firm as a friend. He is the creature of impulse, and consults his feelings rather than his interests. He talks more, and thinks less than an Englishman. He has not so much pride, but he has more vanity; he is more affected by praise or censure. A feverish spirit of distinction rages through the whole Hibernian mind. From the hero at the head of an army, down to the fellow who flourishes his cudgel at a fair, the national spring of action is the desire of admiration. They rush into danger with alacrity, and make a jest of toil, if they think you will be astonished by their bravery, or surprised by their skill. Any one who has noticed a hank of hodmen, coursing each other down a five-story ladder, must have observed, with what emulative agility they spring from round to round, in their dangerous descent; happy, if they can attract the attention of the gazers below, and making a sport of labours which few Englishmen can be found to perform.

The Irishman has more dash and display about

him than the Englishman. Business has but a small chance of his attention, when pleasure stands smiling in his way. Compared with the Englishman, his character is more striking, but not more estimable; his qualities have more lustre, but not more richness. The Irishman affords a contrast to the account given of himself by Addison: he has generally more ready money in his pocket than the Englishman, but, perhaps, he cannot so often draw on his banker for a thousand pounds. The current of his intellect rolls on more rapidly, and covers a wider space of channel; but the stream is not always so deep or so clear. He has more wit, but less wisdom, than the Englishman; he has more humour, more fancy, and more imagination, but not more genius, more judgment, or more taste.

But this digression has led me farther than I intended from my course. We must now endeavour to overtake Mr. Walter Maurice D'Arcy, who, having crossed the channel, arrived safe in his native land, to display all the advantages of an English education, and enjoy the *éclat* of an

Oxford scholar, amongst those of his early associates, who had been content to matriculate in the University of Dublin.

In person, D'Arcy was certainly very much improved, and might justly be considered a fine specimen of the Milesian stock. He was tall and well proportioned—a happy medium between the Hercules and the Adonis—sufficiently muscular for strength, but not too robust for elegance. His countenance was manly—somewhat florid, and animated by large dark eyes and eyebrows; the whole expressing activity of body, and vivacity of mind.

The inward, however, did not perfectly correspond with the outward man. His passions were violent, and his temper impetuous. As he had never been taught to regulate the one, or restrain the other, they were, without hesitation, indulged to an extent, limited only by the inconvenience which resulted from their gratification.

He had little learning, less religion, and no morality. His father, like all fathers who are too much engaged in pleasure or business to

occupy themselves with their children, thought he had performed all the duties of a parent, when he sent him to school, and afterwards to college. What he learned there, or whether he learned any thing there, it never once entered his head to inquire. As he placed his son at a Protestant school, he concluded he would not be a Papist; and that was quite religion enough for his purpose. As he was entered a gentleman commoner at Oxford, he took it for granted, he would acquire there as much literature and morality, as became a gentleman who wished to advance himself in the world, and make his way at court.

The baronet was certainly not disappointed in his expectations: there was no danger whatever, that his son's studies would abstract him from the more important interests of life; and it was pretty evident, his progress amongst the great and the gay, would not be retarded by any inconvenient squeamishness as to the means of advancement.

Notwithstanding, therefore, some striking instances of youthful indiscretion, which pressed

rather heavily on the disordered finances of the family, the old gentleman received his son with some satisfaction—was pleased with his personal appearance, and philosophically reconciled himself to his irregularities, by observing, that he was “ a chip of the old block.”

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER some time spent in the dissipations of Dublin, which, at that period, were of a much more bacchanalian character than would be consistent with the manners of good society in the present day, the military spirit of young D'Arcy led him to adopt the profession of arms.

His father had recently become a member of the Irish Areopagus ; a body, which, for purity and patriotism, has been immortalized in the records of modern times. Although he had failed to work his interest in the county, his apostate zeal had been rewarded by a seat for one of those ancient sanctuaries of public spirit, which send their members to the legislature to represent the government, and mis-represent the people.

For this species of legislative promotion, the baronet was eminently qualified; having neither principle nor patriotism. Though his voice rarely sounded in the debate, his vote always told in the division; and as the policy of English statesmen in Ireland, has ever been to corrupt and compel, rather than to conciliate and convince, provided they could secure support, they cared little for justification.

The baronet's services to *the state* were not without their reward. His claims were acknowledged by the kindred spirits that distributed the patronage of the time; and as he had proved himself, alike regardless of his religion and his country, his son was considered a promising candidate for court favour, equally free from all embarrassing predilections on these points, and therefore a very proper person to receive a commission in the — regiment, then on duty in Dublin.

The army, whatever may be thought of it in a moral point of view, is certainly a good school in which to acquire the manners of a gentleman. La Rochefoucault justly observes, "*L'air bourgeois se perd rarement à la cour; mais il se perd*

tonjours a l'armée." The most unlicked cub of a country farmer, that ever made his way to a marching regiment, through the intermediate gradations of the constabulary force, the yeomanry, or the militia, no sooner gets possession of a pair of colours, than he assumes an air superior to the class from which he sprung; he speedily brushes up into something smart and debonair; and if he have not in his nature such an invincible *gaucherie*, such an irrepressible vigour of vulgarity, as bids defiance to all influence of refinement and grace, he gradually acquires a polish of deportment, which often contrasts favourably, with the less liberal, and less gracious demeanour of the higher classes.

An officer, who is not a coxcomb—who has ceased to take pride in his red coat, his epaulettes, or his moustaches—who has seen enough of service in love and war, not to parade his gallantry on all occasions—and who has had sufficient intercourse with foreign society, to shake off the absurd and offensive nationalities which pass current as patriotism, amongst the illiberal and vulgar of all classes, in all countries; such a man,

who has been disciplined in the world, as well as in the camp—who has laid aside the gasconade of fighting all his battles o'er again, and learned that

“ Of boasting, more than of a bomb afraid,
A soldier should be modest as a maid ;”

such a man is often found to be one of the most agreeable and estimable characters that adorn any class of life. If he have not the erudition of the scholar, or the lights of the man of science, he has the often as useful, and sometimes more available knowledge, of the man of the world ; and possesses a peculiar tact of politeness and propriety, which qualifies him for the most refined circles.

The regiment in which young D'Arcy commenced his military career, was one of those which happened to be more distinguished in peace than in war—more remarkable for its dissipation than its prowess. A regiment generally takes its character from its colonel. The commanding officer sets the fashion in morals and manners, as well as in discipline and dress, and upon him depends

whether dandyism or heroism—puppyism or politeness, shall prevail in the corps.

In this respect, D'Arcy was not fortunate. His colonel was a coxcomb, proud, insolent, and overbearing; and his example was all-powerful, through every gradation of rank, amongst a body of officers, consisting chiefly, of young men of family and fortune, whom, only personal vanity, and the spirit of idleness, had prompted to embrace the profession of arms. They considered the calling of a soldier, as an amusement, rather than an occupation—as affording them a favourable opportunity for profligacy, and investing them with the privilege of impertinence.

Amongst characters like these, our hero soon distinguished himself, as, upon all occasions, the most daring, the most dissipated, and the most disorderly. In the first month after he had joined the regiment, he established his reputation for spirit, in a duel with a brother officer. D'Arcy, like some of his countrymen at home, and like almost all his countrymen who have been educated in England, had the patriotism of pride, but not the pride of patriotism. He had no feeling for

the injuries of Ireland; but a word which he could construe into an insult to the dignity of an Irishman, he resented as a personal offence. He could see the dearest interests of his country assaulted, her population persecuted, and her independence destroyed, without indignation, or even emotion; nay, he could, without scruple, co-operate in the conspiracy against her prosperity, her liberty, and her religion; but his sensibility could not brook a sarcasm against her most palpable defects, or even a joke at the expense of her peculiarities.

This species of patriotism, (if such a manifestation of vanity and egotism can ever be justly called by that name) is but too common amongst that class of Hibernians, who may be considered a kind of Milesian mustees. They are interested in the reputation of Ireland, only as far as their *amour-propre* is involved in it; but they have no love of country—none of that ennobling ardour of sentiment—that generous glow of soul, which springs from the attachment to the place of our birth, with all its associations, local and personal; its habits, manners, and peculiarities.

D'Arcy, however, was an Irishman, and of the

genuine stock. Although his English education might have alienated him from the cause, it could not disconnect him with the character, of his country ; neither could he, like her calumniators of the Creole cast, find compensation in his claim of English descent, for the heartless sacrifice of Irish reputation. Even his selfishness, therefore, only made him the more sore on this subject ; and as he was the only Irish officer in his regiment, his sensibility was soon put to the test.

Englishmen are, in general, bad jokers ; they rarely indulge in a jest themselves, and as rarely appear to relish it in others. Yet, the least facetious among them, will occasionally labour at a joke upon Paddy and his country ; and, perhaps, the most abortive efforts of humour on record, are to be found in the clumsy jocularities of John Bull, when, disposed to give the edge of ridicule to wrong, he tries to be witty at the expense of the sister kingdom.

“ Long from a country ever hardly used—
Unjustly censured—wantonly abused,
Have Britons drawn their sport.”

CHURCHILL'S *Rosciad*.

To quiz the natives was a favourite practice

amongst the officers at the mess-table of the —th regiment; and they were much inclined to continue the amusement, even when D'Arcy became one of their number; but he displayed a spirit and determination of manner which tended to repress this propensity, and led them to suspect that

“ There was in him something dangerous.”

A young lieutenant, however, who, as a sprig of nobility, considered himself to be particularly privileged, forgot this salutary caution; and, in the rashness of his nationality, hazarded a sneer at the new recruit. D'Arcy, who was as little deficient in wit as in spirit, retorted with a humorous severity, that completely turned the laugh against his assailant. Mortified at the ill success of his first sally, and angry, as baffled impertinence always becomes, the young noble endeavoured, in a strain of irritated imbecility, to recover his ground; till, in the agony of his exasperation, he had the brutality to observe, in an audible whisper, that “ the character of the regiment was degraded by the admission of an Irish bog-trotter.”

D'Arcy, who, at the moment, was in the act

of raising a glass of wine to his lips, immediately altered its direction, and delivered it full in the face of his opponent ; at the same time, demanding instant satisfaction for the unprovoked insult he had received.

The manner in which the last bumper had been administered to the haughty young noble, immediately counteracted the effect produced by those bumpers which he had previously taken. Becoming at once sober and civil, he professed himself ready to submit his conduct to the decision of the mess ; but D'Arcy would listen to no terms of accommodation. The interference of the major, however, who presided, effected a postponement of hostilities to the following morning, when the parties met in the Phoenix Park, and D'Arcy, who was an excellent shot, lodged a ball in the body of his antagonist, whose life had nearly been the forfeit of his illiberality.

The spirit with which D'Arcy asserted himself on this occasion, and the evidence which the duel afforded, that he possessed, in no ordinary degree, an accomplishment in which the better orders of his countrymen are generally proficient—~~that of firing at a mark~~—put an end to all fur-

ther molestation on the subject of his country. The standing jokes of the mess-table were suddenly discontinued; and to quiz the natives appeared to be by no means so agreeable a recreation over the bottle, as it had been previously considered by his brother-officers.

The social qualities of D'Arcy were calculated to overcome all prejudices against him. He was lively, loquacious, and good-humoured; had wit enough to be entertaining, and information enough to give an interest to his conversation, without imparting to it the assuming air of instruction. Though fiery and impetuous in repelling the slightest insult, he was never forward to give offence, and seemed to have pleasure in reconciling the quarrels of others. He was always ready for a frolic, and as fertile in resources for conducting it, as in expedients for turning aside whatever disagreeable consequences might result from it.

His irregularities, indeed, were of a nature, which, as far as they operated, tended rather to raise the corps in the public estimation; for, though he was very dissipated, and somewhat prone to mischief, there was an open boldness,

and a manly spirit of gaiety about him, which were highly congenial to the disposition of the people amongst whom they were displayed.

It is no unmerited compliment, to say of the Irish, that they are as martial a race as any in Europe. As far as it may be considered to express a disposition to fight, their claims to that character must be admitted as incontrovertible. It has been jocularly, though not unjustly said of them, that they are the only people who "fight for their amusement;" and, certainly, taking the sons of St. Patrick in the mass, it would not be easy to find a community, amongst whom, the pleasures of the bottle and the battle are more intimately connected, or the ideas of a fray and a festivity so habitually associated.

Though so often employed as agents for enforcing against them the most obnoxious and oppressive laws, the military have always been favourably received by the Irish; and except under circumstances of political or fiscal hostility, English troops, in quarters amongst them, have been treated with a kindness and hospitality which they do not often experience in their own country.

Let an officer conduct himself like a gentleman, avoid irritating nationalities, and do his duty firmly, but not offensively, and they will not only forgive him the severity which he may be employed to exercise against them, but consider his temperance and impartiality as entitling him to their warmest respect and gratitude.

In proportion, however, as they are partial to the character of a soldier, when sustained by the qualities of courage, candour, and liberality which belong to it, they are disgusted by the military coxcomb, who puts on the uniform without partaking of the spirit of the soldier—who considers himself as belonging to a superior caste, whose privilege it is to be ignorant without shame, and insolent with impunity. Of this class were too many of the officers amongst whom D'Arcy had enrolled himself; and the regiment had become unpopular amongst all orders of the people in Dublin, as affected, haughty, and supercilious; exhibiting neither urbanity amongst men, nor gallantry amongst women.

Vices of a masculine character, which have social pleasures for their object, and strong pas-

sion for their apology—which are not inconsistent with generosity, or what the world calls honour, the Irish are disposed to view with considerable indulgence, particularly in the military man. But offences which appear to be, in any degree, connected with effeminacy of manners; which seem to spring from vanity and selfishness, and denote alike, folly and feebleness of character, they regard with contempt and detestation. The cold progeny of pride, arrogance, and affectation, they abhor. In a martial garb, they would prefer a profligate to a puppy.

D'Arcy, although but little influenced in the pursuit of his pleasures, by any sensitive delicacy about his reputation, was mortified to find that he shared in that species of obloquy which the folly, foppery, and insolence of its officers, in public and private, had justly brought down on the regiment to which he belonged. So offensive, indeed, had they become by their misconduct, and such a spirit of resentment appeared to be rising against them, amongst all classes, that the commander-in-chief thought it prudent to remove the regiment to other quarters.

Previous to its removal, however, circumstances occurred which induced D'Arcy to terminate his connexion with it, in a manner which illustrated the impetuosity of his character, and excited no little attention.

Although the chastisement he had inflicted on the arrogant young coxcomb who had insulted him, when he first joined the mess, effectually repressed all disposition to treat him with disrespect, and his convivial manners had even made him a favourite with the corps in general, yet the colonel always regarded him with coldness and apparent aversion. Haughty and overbearing, inflated with military consequence, ignorant of the essential properties of a soldier, but a martinet in all the minutiae of service on the parade, Colonel Shervington set an example of supercilious insolence, and frivolous affectation, which gave a tone to the whole corps; the officers, with flattering servility, reflecting the manners of their commander. The appointment of young D'Arcy to a commission in his regiment, had very much excited his dissatisfaction; for, with that vulgar illiberality which is ever characteristic of a little

mind, he piqued himself on having none but English officers under his command ; and a knowledge of his sentiments in this respect, had not a little encouraged the spirit of rudeness and insult, which D'Arcy at first experienced, and which he so promptly and severely punished.

Shervington had married a sister of the young nobleman who had been at once the offending and the suffering party in the duel ; and though the wantonness of the provocation had, according to every principle of honour, exonerated D'Arcy from all blame in the transaction, the colonel conceived an enmity to him, which manifested itself upon all occasions. Secure beneath the shield of his superior rank, he scrupled not to employ, towards the object of his dislike, every means of mortification and annoyance, which could be practised without committing his personal or military responsibility.

At the mess, he treated D'Arcy with the most unbending *hauteur*, studiously avoided addressing him, and never asked him to take wine. D'Arcy was sure to be employed upon any disagreeable duty of the regiment, and was frequently rebuked in the

face of his company on parade, for some little inadvertent deviation from precise rule, in such important matters as the shirt collar appearing above the black stock, or his lappels not being buttoned back exactly according to regimental orders, in that case made and provided. In short, D'Arcy found himself constantly exposed to all those petty vexations which insolence in authority knows so well how to inflict, and which a proud and generous spirit knows so little how to bear. Often, in the frenzy of his irritation, was he tempted to brave all consequences, and satisfy his feelings, by chastising his oppressor, even at the head of his regiment.

The opportunity which the principle of military submission affords, for the exercise of this galling species of tyranny, in the higher officers of the army and navy, is, perhaps, the most serious objection to the profession of a soldier or a sailor. The rules of the service cannot regulate the feelings, nor can the various modifications of insult and indignity be brought within the jurisdiction of the Horse-Guards. Under such a system of subordination, the most refined forms

of civility may be used as the medium of the most mortifying offence, without supplying tangible matter for a court-martial, an inquiry, or even a complaint. Where power is despotic, there is no discrimination competent to define how far authority may be exercised without insolence, and duty exacted without oppression. How insupportable to the feelings of a man of honour and a gentleman, to be exposed in helpless submission to the scowling eye of arrogance with an *aiguillette*, or to suffer, perhaps, from a series of petty persecutions, inflicted under the specious forms of discipline and duty!

The violent spirit of D'Arcy was ill calculated to undergo, patiently, an infliction of this nature; and on some new instance of provocation, he resolved, at all hazards, to extricate himself from a situation which had become at last absolutely insupportable. As the shortest way of effecting this, and at the same time, as the speediest mode of enabling him to satisfy his feelings with respect to Colonel Shervington, he came to the determination of throwing up his commission; a measure which would at once release him from

all military subjection, and leave him at liberty to take such steps as might be suggested by his indignation. Not having purchased his commission, he felt himself more warranted to deal with it in this way; and he had sufficient confidence in the peculiar spirit of his father, to be tolerably secure, that, whatever displeasure he might feel at such a sacrifice, would be soon appeased, by a consideration of the motives in which it originated.

To the commander of the forces in Dublin, therefore, he transmitted his commission, accompanied by a letter in which he detailed the nature of the grievances which compelled him, at such a sacrifice, of his interest and professional views, to withdraw himself from a situation, where the feelings of a gentleman were outraged, in a manner which he could neither resist nor resent.

After this measure, the next consideration with D'Arcy was, in what way he could, most effectually and publicly, give expression to the indignation which had so long boiled in his breast against the colonel; and he determined, as the

mode most congenial to the impetuosity of his character, to insult Shervington on the parade of the regiment, in order that he might satisfy his feelings on the spot where they had been so often wounded, and assert himself in the presence of those who had witnessed, and, perhaps, enjoyed his mortification.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN the proceeding which D'Arcy meditated, as mentioned in the last chapter, it was necessary that he should select a friend, upon whose courage and coolness he could rely ; and Charles O'Hara, a relation and an old school-fellow, at that time commanding a corps of Dublin Volunteers, immediately occurred to him, as a person whose experience in affairs of honour, well qualified him to officiate on such an occasion.

O'Hara was several years older than D'Arcy, but a similarity of spirit had attracted them to each other at school, and the former found in his young associate an apt scholar, as ripe for mischief as himself. The attachment, commenced thus early, was renewed after D'Arcy's return from

Oxford. O'Hara had passed through his career in the Dublin University with pretty nearly the same honours and advantages which D'Arcy had obtained on the banks of the Isis. The frolics of our "silent sister" were, however, of a more pugnacious character than those which occupied the students of the English Alma Mater; and, independent of the general warfare against the watch and the theatres, which the *college lads* at that time carried on with equal spirit and perseverance, and in which he bore a distinguished part, young O'Hara had been engaged, either as principal or second, in so many duels, that he obtained the enviable reputation of the most daring *blood*, and formidable *fire-eater* of his day.

Yet, notwithstanding the offensive celebrity which he had thus early attained, he could not justly be considered quarrelsome or ill-tempered. By a kind of Quixotic generosity, not uncommon amongst his countrymen, he was more frequently engaged in the disputes of others than in his own. He was ready to be any man's second; for that was a duty which he held himself bound to perform for every gentleman who paid him the com-

pliment to apply to him for such a service ; and he was so tenacious of the honour of his friend, when it was once placed in his hands, that it could be very rarely extricated, but at the risk of a shot or two. Whatever the cause of quarrel, he considered all attempts at apology or accommodation, as equally suspicious and derogatory, until sanctioned by such a preliminary.

The duty of a second, he contended, was not to make up the quarrel, but to regulate the combat, and be responsible for its being conducted according to the laws of honour. The institution of the modern duel, he maintained to be in the highest degree judicious and salutary ; and to its influence he ascribed the superior polish and refinement, which, since its introduction, have characterized the manners of the better orders of society, when compared with the coarseness and even brutality which degraded the civil intercourse of the Ancients. " If the heroes of Homer," (he would triumphantly ask) " had been liable to answer at the point of the sword for the slightest expression of incivility or disrespect in their intercourse with each other, could they ever have descended to wrangle and scold like

angry fish-women, with their arms a-kimbo ; or would the pages of the Iliad have been disgraced by the records of such vulgar vituperation ?—No ! the responsibility of the sword or the pistol is the only safeguard for the feelings. It takes under its protection the whole tribe of nondescript delicacies and civil decorums, which are too sensitive and undefinable for the coarse tact of statutory legislation.”

The duel may, indeed, be said to be the best preserver of the peace—the most effectual equalizer of civil rights—the true levelling principle which counteracts the disparities of nature and fortune, and puts all gentlemen upon a par. Where the magistrate has no jurisdiction, the duellist comes into play. He takes cognizance of the manners, as the former does of the morals of society—he restrains, within due bounds, the proceedings of public assemblies—keeps order in a ball-room better than ten masters of the ceremonies, though every man of them were a Beau Nash or a Beau Brummell—and rescues those who have more spirit than strength, from the usurpations of muscular arrogance and mere physical superiority.

The duel is the natural offspring of the ancient

trial by battel—a mode of decision very much in fashion amongst our ancestors, and still resorted to with singular satisfaction by all classes of persons in the sister kingdom: the pistol and the pike, the sword and the shilelah, being the favourite umpires of dispute amongst that pugnacious population.

As an administrator of this peculiar process, O'Hara had early qualified himself. With the pistol, he was a candle-snuffer, and with the sword, he was, like Tybalt,

“The very butcher of a silk button.”

The latter instrument not having been entirely laid aside, in his day, as an appendage to the dress of a gentleman, he had some opportunities of proving that he could use it with skill. On one occasion, particularly, at Lucas's coffee-house, then the “Brookes's” of Dublin—after a night passed in play, some dispute arose at breakfast between him and a brother officer. Fevered as they were by wine, want of sleep, and the occupation in which they had been engaged, they drew their swords and fought out of the coffee-room into the street; O'Hara, with equal power and impetuosity, pressing on his antagonist, who

continued retreating on the defensive, parrying, with great skill and coolness, the thrusts of his adversary. The passengers in the street, surprised at such an exhibition, collected round the combatants, who made their way through the crowd, till they came opposite to the stand of chairmen at the Exchange, facing Parliament-street, where, some of those able-bodied fellows, with their poles beat down the swords of both parties, and succeeded in separating them, but not before O'Hara had wounded his opponent in the sword-arm, and received himself a scratch on the shoulder.

The publicity of the contest having attracted general attention, the interference of friends, as blood had been drawn, succeeded in preventing farther consequences.

The peculiar taste and prowess which O'Hara displayed in all matters connected with affairs of honour, occasioned him to be consulted as an authority, and selected as an umpire in disputed points. His decisions, too, were generally submitted to without appeal. To demur was considered a contempt of court, for which the refractory party was expected to answer, as for a personal offence.

O'Hara laid down the law as to the number of paces to be measured between the combatants—the exact size of the pistols—how many shots should take place, before a proposal for accommodation could be offered or accepted. He established in his apartment a drill for young duellists; and it was his favourite amusement to instruct them in the ceremonial according to which, a man of honour and spirit may blow out the brains of his best friend and most intimate companion, without the smallest impeachment of his gallantry, his morality, or his humanity.

With the precision of a dancing-master, he fixed the position in which you were to stand, and proved to you, that by a judicious management of your attitude, your arm, and your pistol, you presented to the ball of your adversary, a target in which six inches only were mortal. He determined by rule, whether parties were to fire together by signal, or cast lots for the first fire; whether they should stand back to back, wheel round and fire, or advance on each other from their ground, and fire at their own option; and would tell you, in what desperate extremity of

mortal offence, the combatants could be authorised to assassinate each other, while holding the corners of a pocket-handkerchief.

Such was the man whose assistance our hero determined to secure in the affair in which he was about to engage ; and, certainly, a better second could not be chosen by any man who was desirous to fight. D'Arcy found O'Hara at breakfast ; a pair of barking-irons, as he usually called his pistols, on the table before him, with his writing desk, on which lay a note that appeared to have been just written.

“ What ! ” cried D'Arcy, on entering the room, “ pistols for two, and muffins for six ? Why, my friend, this looks like business ; but I hope not on your own account.”

“ D'Arcy, you are the very man I wanted. But, come, take your coffee with me, and you shall know for what.”

“ Nay,” replied D'Arcy, “ you are too late for me. But I suppose you have had a field-day this morning in the Fifteen Acres. First or second, Charles, I am glad to see you in a whole skin.”

“ 'Pon my honour, D'Arcy, I'm provoked be-

yond measure. I have spent my morning very foolishly, as you shall hear. I was prevailed on to go out with young Burton, of Ballyman, who had some words at the theatre with a pert coxcomb of a counsellor. So having adjusted the preliminaries to my satisfaction, we proceeded to the Phoenix to finish the affair handsomely, as I thought; when, on the ground, my boy, full of spunk and cool as a cucumber, behold you! up comes the man of law with his second, proffering an apology—misconception, forsooth!—too much wine, and what not. Now you know how I hate this sort of child's play: I therefore objected to it, and urged the necessity of at least exchanging a brace of shots for the honour of the parties. But the man-of-law's second declared that, as an ample apology had been offered, he could not consent to proceed farther; and that he should consider me legally responsible for the consequences, if any thing unpleasant occurred. 'O, ho!' said I, 'my lad, is that your drift? I perceive, sir, you wish to take the cause out of the counsellor's hands, and do a little business on your own account. Mr. Burton, you are at

liberty to accept the apology offered if you think proper; this gentleman and I must have a little conversation on the subject as soon as convenient.'—Now, D'Arcy, as I don't like losing time on these occasions, I have written a bit of a note, which I want you to deliver for me this morning."

Opening the unsealed note, he read as follows:—

"SIR,
"As I conceive that your procedure, in the little affair in which we were engaged this morning, was inconsistent with the rules which are admitted amongst gentlemen, to govern the conduct of seconds on such occasions, and personally disrespectful to me, I shall be obliged by your naming a friend with whom the gentleman who does me the honour to bear this note, may communicate on the part of,

"Sir,
"Your most obedient humble servant,
"CHARLES O'HARA."

"My dear fellow," cried D'Arcy, "I am al-

ways at your command ; and, odd enough, my business with you this morning is to solicit a similar service ; but are not you, in the present instance, rather volunteering an affair with this person. You know I do not pretend to be an authority in these matters, but I cannot see why the seconds should quarrel because the principals have come to an accommodation."

"D'Arcy," said O'Hara, "I must read you my 'chapter on the duties of seconds,' where you will find two different cases laid down, in which the second is converted into a principal ; and five more in which he is entitled to require satisfaction even from his own party."

"Nay, then," said D'Arcy, laughing, "a second, before he interferes in a duel, should make his will as well as the principal."

"The office of second," resumed O'Hara, with great gravity, "is a serious and important function. The second superintends the administration of a system upon which the peace and decorum of society depend. He may be said to be the magistrate of good manners, whose business it is to see the common law of honour en-

forced with strictness and impartiality, not only for the advantage of the parties, but for the good of the community."

"But," observed D'Arcy, "what has the community to do with my private quarrels? and why should accommodation be refused, when a sufficient apology is offered."

"D'Arcy, my lad," resumed O'Hara, "you have not considered this matter so deeply as it deserves. Like all boys, you would quarrel and fight, or be friends, according to your humour, without rule or system, and without considering the consequences of such irregularities. But a duel is peculiarly the appeal of a gentleman, and if, in resorting to it, you are sheltered in some degree from the laws, it is only to incur a double responsibility to the manners of society for your mode of conducting it. When you are engaged in a duel, you must consider, that you have not only to obtain satisfaction for the offence against yourself, but also to punish an offender against the proprieties of civil intercourse; and although the first may be satisfied with an apology, the latter cannot be secured without a penalty. No,

no, seconds are umpires, not negotiators. After a challenge has been delivered and accepted, matters are not to be patched up with honour to the parties, or advantage to society, without smelling powder. I would no more compound a quarrel than a felony. You encourage the bully and the coxcomb to new violations of civil decorum, when, by accepting an apology as the composition for impertinence, you suffer them to escape the just consequences of their misconduct."

"Then," said D'Arcy, "you would have every duel a mortal combat, and make life the penalty of a dispute."

"By no means," replied O'Hara; "but to render the duel effectual for its object, (which I take to be the preservation of peace and politeness) I would make it so far certain in its penalties, that the discharge of a case of pistols should be the *sine qua non* of accommodation."

"But then," observed D'Arcy, "you expose the unoffending party to suffer as well as the aggressor."

“To be sure, my good sir,” rejoined O’Hara ; “the honourable risk he runs secures the duellist, in case of accident, from the odium of assassination, and makes him a generous champion in the public cause, rather than the angry avenger of a private injury. The man who comes forward to chastise insolence, and call brutality to account, is a general benefactor ; he stands in the gap of good manners to check the assaults of barbarism, and hazards his life, that the more timid and unprotected portion of the community may enjoy themselves in politeness and peace. Believe me, D’Arcy, the duellist is your true peace-officer ; a far more effective guardian of civil society than any that the cohorts of Sir John Fielding can supply.”

“ My dear fellow,” said D’Arcy, who knew how apt his friend was to hold forth on this topic, and who wished to introduce his own business ; “ my dear fellow, you know I am a disciple of your faith and practice in these matters ; and it is because I meditate a little performance of my own, for the public good, in this way, that I have called upon you this morning.”

But O'Hara had got upon his hobby, and was not to be so easily dismounted.

"Certainly," continued he; "that is the true light in which to consider it. As a means of gratifying your resentment, or righting your wrongs, the practice of duelling is absurd; for what can be more irrational or ridiculous, than the principle, that because a man has violated your feelings, you should insist upon giving him a most favourable opportunity to strike at your life? 'You have insulted me, sir, and my honour requires that you should endeavour to shoot me through the head.' This would be monstrous folly; but the duellist is influenced by nobler motives than any which result from personal feelings. When a gentleman receives an insult, the peace and good order of society are outraged in his person. The coarse and vulgar ministrations of law take no cognizance of those multifarious, though indefinable offences, which lacerate the generous spirit, and inflict wounds more deep than any bodily injuries.

"There is no tribunal before which an offender of the feelings can be cited, to answer for his delinquency. He is, perhaps, too powerful for con-

tempt, and too ruffianly for remonstrance; you cannot cope with him in rudeness, or kick him into decorum. What then is to be done? Is the culprit to escape unquestioned, till all the civilities of life are exploded, and society becomes a brawl and a bear-garden? No; the indignity you have suffered, gives you a right to vindicate the cause of the community, which is involved in your own; you consider yourself as an appointed functionary, to enforce the provisions of public decorum. You regard the delinquent as a violator of the social compact, against whom there are no legal means of redress; you, therefore, appeal to arms; you make war upon him, and trust your cause to the trial by battle, in which we are to suppose that the right will always prevail."

"Nothing can be more clear," interrupted D'Arcy, "and it is precisely on that ground that I come." But the current of O'Hara's eloquence on this subject was not to be impeded, and he eagerly continued.—

"Look at the effects of duelling upon society; see, at what a small expense of human life, the

offensive humours and angry passions of men are kept in subjection. The very name of a duellist has a tranquillizing effect upon the whole Bobadil crew. Even those '*homines agrestes*,' the un-couth race of country squires, are found to assume some awkward airs of urbanity, when they know there is a fire-eater in their neighbourhood. Look in at Nangle's or Lucas's coffee-house, and if you find some swaggering coxcombs disposed to be impertinent or unruly, only mention my friend Tiger Roche in their hearing, or let fighting Keogh but show his face amongst them, and you will see how soon the elements of insolence will subside into civility and peace. Depend upon it, my friend, those little instruments, (pointing to the pistols on the table) with hair-triggers, in skilful hands, at twelve paces distance, are more effectual guardians of the peace, and of good order in society, than any which legislation can devise, or the bureau of Monsieur de Sartine himself supply."

"I am so convinced of their efficacy," eagerly interposed D'Arcy, "that I wish to have immediate recourse to their assistance."

“ But, as correctives,” rejoined O’Hara, “ their operation depends upon system and regulation. Individuals in a state of hostility, like nations, must be governed by some generally recognised principles, which all parties find it their interest to maintain. As the end of all war is peace, or public security against lawless oppression, so, the object of the duel, which may be called the war of private life, is to secure the general intercourse of society from wanton insult, or personal disrespect. Society, in giving you a right over my life, which it may be fairly said to do, when it permits you, with impunity, under given circumstances, to send a bullet through my head, or a sword through my body ; in giving you, I say, a right of this kind, which is sanctioned by our manners, in opposition to our laws, society is entitled to prescribe the conditions upon which a privilege so important is to be enjoyed, as well as the regulations under which it ought to be exercised. If you be permitted, in this instance, to take the law, apparently, into your own hands, it is not for your particular gratification, but for the general advantage. You are allowed to demand satisfaction for your

own insulted feelings, only, as the best means of protecting the feelings of society, and screening them from future aggression. Your ministration is preventive as well as penal, and should not be subjected to the uncertainties of personal caprice.

“Your individual quarrel might, indeed, be arranged by concession and apology; but you are pledged to exact an atonement for the offence which society has received in your person; and the hazard of a shot or two is indispensable towards any satisfactory or honourable reparation.”

“My dear fellow,” exclaimed D’Arcy, “your theory is admirable; as you describe it, a duel seems an act of justice, and fighting, a moral obligation.”

“Here,” said O’Hara, taking a bundle of manuscript from the drawer of the table at which he sat; “here is a work upon which I have been engaged for some time; in which my views on this subject are developed with considerable care. As the trial by battle, however, decried in our law courts, must always be the favourite mode of decision to

which gentlemen resort for the adjustment of differences, in which their honour or their feelings are concerned, I shall give it to the public, under the title of 'The Institutes of Honour, or Code of Private Quarrel, laid down according to the best authorities, ancient and modern.' I shall prefix an essay on the age of chivalry, and an introduction, containing an authentic account of the most remarkable single combats, from the days of Don Bellianis of Greece, down to the sanguinary contest between Lord Mohun and the Duke of Hamilton; the whole wound up with the most interesting rencontres of our own times."

"Illustrated with *cuts*," added D'Arcy, laughing; "and adorned with a *striking* likeness of the author as a frontispiece."

"I am quite serious, D'Arcy, I assure you," said O'Hara, not quite pleased at the jocular mode in which his friend seemed disposed to treat his literary intentions.

"Well, my dear fellow," rejoined D'Arcy, "you know you are my Magnus Apollo; and if you do publish on the subject, I have no doubt you will rival Hugo Grotius himself, '*de jure*

pacis et belli, and be the very Puffendorf of polite society. But let us attend now to your practice as well as your theory; you say you have got a little affair on hand yourself, and I am come to you with a declaration of war on your own principles, and in which I want to engage you as an auxiliary."

"With all my heart," cried O'Hara, rubbing his hands with satisfaction. "An alliance offensive and defensive—but who is the enemy? Before you speak, I'll swear he is in the wrong; and you know,

"'Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just.'"

"Oh!" answered D'Arcy, "my cause,

"'Preaching to stones, would make them capable.'"

"Well," added O'Hara, "you know my principles; I am no negotiator on such occasions; no special pleader of apology. When the quarrel is a good quarrel, I never mar it by meddling; and, once in the field, we must have no shilly-shally work—no *ifs*."

"Hang the cowardly conditional!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "It is only fit to patch up dandy disputes, and men-milliner animosities. I am for

'*Bellum internecinum*;' will that satisfy you? —Seats on a powder-cask, or slugs in a saw-pit. You know I am no flincher."

"Give me your hand," said O'Hara; "you were always a lad of spunk, and I did you wrong. By heaven! the very supposition was an offence—an insult; and I doubt if you can overlook it, even in a friend. You have certainly a right to demand satisfaction first, according to my own code, and you shall have it, my dear fellow, with pleasure; when we have exchanged shots, I can make you an apology."

Thank you, thank you, my worthy friend, said D'Arcy; "I know your liberality on these points, but I won't stand on ceremony. Just at present, if you please, I would rather engage you as second than as principal."

"Well," rejoined O'Hara, "if you desire to postpone your claim on me without prejudice, as the lawyers say, you can do so; and, in the mean time, we may render each other a mutual service. What is your cause of war? '*teterrima causa belli*;' as I believe our old friend, Horace, has it."

D'Arcy had no sooner stated the irritation which was excited in his mind by the conduct of Colonel Shervington, and the course of provocation under which he had so long suffered, than his friend, drawing his manuscript again from its depository, exclaimed, with evident exultation, "My dear fellow, I have your case provided for here to a tittle. Let me see," turning over the leaves, "Section the Fourth, under what head? public insults—private insults; studied insults—no; insults by words—by looks—by acts; insults by proxy—by implication—by suggestion—by insinuation or procuration. Oh! here we have it, chapter twenty-five, page five hundred and seventy-nine. " 'Insults from superiors!' all classed, you see, and considered under their proper heads, with their various qualifying circumstances and distinctions:—'Insults from superiors;' that's the general head; now for the particular specification. 'Insults from superiors in rank—in station—in fortune—in age, in office and authority.' Your case falls under this last denomination, and is thus treated of.—[*Reading in a tone of importance*]:—

" 'Of the three great genera of offence—the

venial, the malevolent, and the mortal, which we,'—you see I adopt the pronoun plural, as most becoming the dignity of the subject:—'of the three great genera of offence, which we have considered in the present work, and which the inefficiency of human laws leaves to the more applicable jurisprudence of public opinion, and the summary process of the pistol or sword; the species of which we are about to treat in this chapter, belongs to the second genus, or the class *malevolent*. The offence which it constitutes, is particularly aggravated by the relative position of the parties; the one being in a situation to require, and the other, to afford protection. It is termed *malevolent*, because it proceeds from an evil disposition, and indicates an ungenerous and ignoble spirit. A gentleman will always studiously avoid giving offence to those who are not in a situation to resent it. The army, the navy, and all official persons, are particularly subject, and sensitive to this species of insult, which always partakes of cowardice and cruelty—of insolence and oppression. The wound which it inflicts, rankles and festers in the heart for years; and never can be completely

healed, until time and circumstances have afforded to the sufferer an opportunity of recovering his own respect, by demanding and exacting retribution.'—So much for the wrong: now for the remedy.

“By the ‘Institutes of Honor,’ the aggrieved party, in this case, is allowed a latitude in the indulgence of his feelings, proportioned to the exasperation which the nature of the insult is calculated to excite.

“If a gentleman could descend to such a procedure, he would be justified in inflicting personal chastisement on the offender. He may, however, pass upon him some personal indignity, and follow it up by an immediate summons to the field. The offence does not admit of apology; the parties must continue to exchange shots at nine paces distance, till the appellant declares himself perfectly satisfied, either by his adversary being put *hors de combat*, or acknowledging himself in the wrong.’ ”

“Bravo! admirable!” exclaimed D’Arcy;—

“By Heaven!

Thou marshall’st me the way that I was going.’

All quarrels must henceforth be conducted according to your code ; you will be renowned as the very Draco of duellists."

" I am not sanguinary in my principles," said O'Hara, gravely ; " and to render the practice of duelling useful, or rare, you must make the appeal *du dernier ressort*, serious and systematic. If you have an hour to spare, I will just read you a few chapters, and you will then see my drift."

Alarmed at the prospect of listening to a long dissertation, which, from the disorder of the manuscript, would require as much time to arrange as to read, D'Arcy hardly knew how to extricate himself from his position, with an author so sensitive as O'Hara, who might consider his unwillingness to attend to him, as coming under some particular denomination of offence. He, however, reminded his friend of the serious affair in which he was about to engage with Colonel Shervington ; expressing, at the same time, his desire to proceed in it, exactly according to the regulations laid down in the " Institutes of Honor."

" Oh, ay ! very true," said O'Hara ; and

having exacted a promise from D'Arcy, that he would shortly devote a morning to the perusal of the whole work, the author, for the present, returned his papers to their usual place of deposit. After a short consultation, it was agreed that D'Arcy, accompanied by his friend, should repair the following morning to the parade of Colonel Shervington's regiment, and there, in the presence of all his officers, declare his opinion of the treatment he had experienced from their commander ; demanding, at the same time, immediate and ample satisfaction.

The matter having been thus arranged, the two friends made an appointment to take an early breakfast together the next day at O'Hara's apartments ; and D'Arcy proceeded forthwith, to execute the charge intrusted to him by the former, relative to the *unsatisfactory* affair in which he had been that morning engaged.

CHAPTER XV.

D'ARCY was punctual the following morning at the breakfast table of his friend. Besides the apparatus necessary for their repast, he found the board spread with divers cases of pistols, two or three small swords, a powder flask, and some bullets, which seemed of recent manufacture, deposited in a saucer.

"I always cast my own bullets," said O'Hara, after the first salutation; "so much depends upon the accuracy of fit, and the perfect roundness of the ball. I have, therefore, a particular mould for each pistol, so mathematically true to the bore, that the bullets, in loading, would flatten a hair, if it happened to be in the way."

“ Your armoury appears to be extensive,” observed D’Arcy ; “ but I suppose we shall not take the field before to-morrow morning.”

“ Why, I don’t know how that may be, said O’Hara ; “ the public manner in which you propose to declare war to-day, must necessarily attract attention ; and, in order to avoid interruption from peace-officers and impertinent people, the best way will be (as there is no room for parley) to repair at once to *the Fifteen Acres* ;* you know they lie quite convenient to the barracks ; and the affair may be finished there at once, without any noise or nonsense.”

D’Arcy eagerly adopted this suggestion, as affording him the earliest opportunity of indulging his resentment ; “ but,” said he, “ you must lend me a pair of your barking-irons ;—not supposing I should want them so early, I am not provided with my own.”

“ With all the pleasure in life,” replied O’Hara ; “ here they are, of all sorts, my dear fellow, *utrum horum*, as Lilly says : take which you please, but if you’ll be ruled by me, these are the ticklers ;”

* A part of the Phoenix Park, much resorted to for the purpose of deciding affairs of honour.

taking up one of a pair on the table. "With either of these I'll engage to split a bullet on the edge of a knife at any distance within pistol range. They belonged to the famous Sligo man, Beau Bateman, and have done execution in their time I assure you. I won them from him in a handy-cap, the day after his duel with the Knight of Kilgobbin."

"Oh!" said D'Arcy, "I have often heard of that affair; at Oxford, it was quoted as a proof of Irish ferocity; but where lay the blame in that business?"

"With Kilgobbin, certainly, in the first instance," replied O'Hara; "but, subsequently, with the seconds. If my work had been out at the time, they would have known their duty better, and the fatal result might have been avoided."

"They had been great friends, I believe?" observed D'Arcy.

"Yes, thick as inkle weavers," said O'Hara; "but they had a dispute on the turf about a bet on the paddereen mare.* The knight, who was the loser, grew warm; and Bateman, laughingly, said to him, 'Why, knight, you are more unlucky than I thought you were.'

* A celebrated racer at that period.

“ ‘How so, sir?’

“ ‘You have lost your temper as well as your money.’

“ ‘I don’t know, sir,’ replied the knight ‘whether a little of your coolness would enable me to preserve the one, but I am sure a little of your cunning would have prevented my losing the other.’

“ ‘Cunning!’ repeated Bateman, with an expression of surprise; ‘nay, now I fear for your discretion, which would be the worst loss of’ all, since it is that which you can least afford.’

“ ‘Egad!’ said a foolish fellow among the bystanders, with a horse laugh, ‘Egad, knight, he is down upon you there!’

“ A man is never so disposed to be quarrelsome as when he is conscious he is angry without cause, and finds the laugh turned against him by the good humour of his opponent. The knight, therefore, so little relished the merriment which Bateman’s last observation had excited, that, with undisguised acrimony he replied to him,—

“ ‘You are disposed, sir, to play off your wit, as well as your wager, at my expense; but give

me leave to tell you, your joke is a bad one, and I'll make you answer for it seriously.'

" 'Poh! poh!' rejoined Bateman, sneeringly, 'you overrate your powers, Kilgobbin; *you* cannot make me serious.'

" 'I'll try, however,' said the knight, 'if I cannot teach you to be civil.'

" 'I rather think you want a lesson yourself in that way,' rejoined Bateman; 'and I have no objection to give you one.'

" At this period of the altercation, to which all around began to attend, somebody touched Bateman's horse behind, and made him start forward a pace or two, in the direction of Kilgobbin; his rider checking him, and turning round at the same time to see what occasioned the movement, by some accident struck the knight slightly in the face with the lash of his whip. The latter, exasperated beyond all bounds, took this as a following-up of the lesson which Bateman professed his willingness to give him; and, making use of some coarse expression, was proceeding furiously to attack his opponent, when he was interrupted by the interference of those about him.

“Bateman immediately declared the application of his whip to have been entirely accidental ; and that, although he thought Kilgobbin’s expressions intemperate, he had no intention of taking serious notice of them, much less of resorting to so ungentlemanly a mode of displaying his resentment.

“The knight, however, was not to be appeased, and took the matter up, evidently in a bad spirit, as if he had some lurking discontent with Bateman, which he was determined to make this incident the pretext to gratify.

“Bateman was calm and undisturbed, but, after his first declaration, would allow no farther overture to be made on his part ; and, as no accommodation was to be expected, a meeting was arranged for the following morning.

“I have the whole affair noted down in my work, amongst the celebrated duels.

“They fought on the Curragh of Kildare, in the presence of five hundred spectators.”

O’Hara, seeing D’Arcy interested in the relation, continued.

“It was a glorious morning in September ; the sun shining strong, but the air rather cold. Bate-

man, who was the first man that ever put a pistol into my hand, asked me to go with him to the ground ; merely, as he said, that I might see the sport.

“ I confess, I gladly assented : I was then a raw boy, had never been engaged in any transaction of this kind ; and, as I considered an affair of honour quite essential to the reputation of a young man of spirit, I was delighted at the opportunity of observing how two such men would conduct themselves on such an occasion.

“ They were old stagers, prime shots, and game to the back-bone. Of the two, however, Kilgobbin was the most famed for the pistol ; and had never gone out, without knocking down, or at least, winging his man. They well knew each other’s powers, and that made them less disposed to an accommodation, which might be attributed to wrong motives. Besides, from the nature of the quarrel, as it was taken up by the appellant, it could not but have a serious result to one, or both of the parties.

“ The knight was a rough, rather coarse, ruddy complexioned man, about forty, with a scar

under his eye, which he got in a scuffle with a cavalry officer, in the pump-room at Bath. Beau Bateman, as he was called, from his peculiar style of dress, was a tall, handsome fellow, evidently younger than his antagonist, full of gaiety and good humour, and remarkable for that propensity to joke, which is so much the characteristic of our countrymen.

“ I eagerly observed his countenance when we met in the morning, but all was calm and steady ; his eagle eye as bright and brisk as ever ; he was even more talkative and jocular than usual. He had been particularly attentive to his dress, which was always in the extreme of the fashion ; and, in short, he manifested in his whole demeanour, such a perfect *sang froid*, that had it not been for a slight tremor of the upper lip, when, turning aside to me, he told me, *in case of accident*, to give his pistols to his nephew—a chum of mine in college (who, by-the-by, was afterwards the first man I wounded with these very pistols) ; had it not been, I say, for this slight tremor, and a pressure of the hand with which he

accompanied his directions, nobody would have supposed that he was about to present himself as a target to the best shot in Ireland."

"Was he a good mark?" inquired D'Arcy.

"No! he was thin," replied O'Hara, "and well understood how to take his position. Egad, well thought of! I must give you some hints on that subject. Stand up, my boy, and I'll show you how to present a proper front to the enemy; you are one of Pharaoh's lean kine, and might make yourself as difficult to hit as the back of a knife; but if you stand square, any bungler may bring you down."

D'Arcy, however, was, from similarity of circumstances, too much interested in the account of the duel, not to wish to hear the remainder of it; looking at his watch, therefore, he assured his friend, there was ample time, as he did not wish to go to the parade of the regiment before ten, and begged him to continue his narration.

"Well," resumed O'Hara, with whom this was always a favourite topic, "we were, I believe, just about to proceed to the ground; but I should

first tell you the names of the seconds. Rick Barton, of Bally Castle, for Bateman, and one of the Frenches, of Mountmelic, for Kilgobbin ; both excellent fellows, but of no great experience, and rather ruled by their principals than guiding them.

“ On our way to the field, we were joined by some common friends of the parties, who lamented the breach which had occurred, and seemed to think, that as the knight acted upon an erroneous impression, something might still be done to effect an accommodation.

“ Bateman, however, in a very decisive tone, declared his resolution, to admit now of no interference of that nature ; observing, that although Kilgobbin was a very honest fellow in the main, when he was thoroughly piqued, and felt himself in the wrong, he was always the most obstinate and unmanageable. He stated, also, that if Kilgobbin were to withdraw his challenge, he, Bateman, would consider himself bound to call him out, for having doubted his assertion. Matters, therefore, were now left to take their course.

“ On arriving at the ground, we saw the knight

and his party in conversation, and a number of persons scattered about at a distance.

“ Bateman, politely lifting his hat, said, ‘ Good morning, gentlemen, I hope we have not kept you waiting.’ French answered, ‘ By no means, we were before our time.’ Kilgobbin, in a rather ungracious way, replied to his adversary’s salutation, ‘ Sir, your most obedient.’ The others shook him cordially by the hand, for his jocular manners had made him a general favourite.

“ The seconds were now about to measure the distance—nine paces, when Kilgobbin remarked, that we were in the view of some cabins on the right. This seemed an odd objection, as there was no interruption to be apprehended from such a quarter, and many of their inhabitants were collecting round to see the sport. He suggested, however, that we should remove about a quarter of a mile further, to a fine level turf, on the banks of a pond called Brown’s-hole, from the name of a fool who thought fit to jump into it.

“ As we proceeded, I occasionally observed the knight’s countenance, and I thought he appeared

to be flushed, eager, and somewhat restless; looking round frequently with an unquiet eye, and paying only a sort of yawning attention to what was said to him.

“ All this time, Bateman was as gay and agreeable as ever, cracking his jokes, and sometimes pleasantly pointing them at the sulky air of his adversary, declaring ‘ he saw no reason why old friends should not shoot each other in good humour, when their honour required that they should resort to such a ceremony.’

“ By the time we had reached the spot, and the ground was measured out, the spectators had become so numerous, that it was necessary to appoint two gentlemen to keep the lines, as it were, and warn the lookers on out of the range of the bullets.

“ The most intense interest appeared to pervade the whole group.

“ Kilgobbin, I perceived, had, during the arrangement, so manœuvred, as to get at that side which would enable him to stand with his back to the sun. Every thing was now nearly ready, the pistols loaded, the flints examined, and the se-

conds settling apart the order of proceeding ; when, to my surprise, the knight took off his coat and gave it to his servant to hold ; then baring his right arm up to the elbow, and stepping a few paces to the side of the pond, deliberately plunged it into the water, and held it there."

" Good God ! " exclaimed D'Arcy, " what a vindictive spirit that displayed."

" So it was felt, I assure you," replied O'Hara ; " and a murmur of disapprobation ran through the whole party. The knight, however, was not influenced, though he seemed mortified by the manifestation of feeling which had broken forth ; and Bateman observing him, exclaimed, in a laughing tone, ' What ! knight, are you nervous ? '

" ' Yes,' answered Kilgobbin, sneeringly ; ' *you* frighten me, and a cool hand is a good safeguard.'

" ' A cool head is better,' replied Bateman.

" ' A cold heart may make it so, Mr. Bateman,' retorted the knight ; ' and I leave you all the benefit that is to be derived from it.'

" Here one of the country people, standing near with a small bottle of the ' native' in his hand,

to comfort him in the freshness of the morning, conceiving, I suppose, that Kilgobbin was complaining of the coldness of his heart, which he concluded was a very unlucky feeling at such a moment, with equal simplicity and good nature said,—

“ ‘ Ah, then, may be your honour would take a drop of a dram ? ’ ”

“ ‘ How can he, my good fellow, ’ said Bateman ;
“ ‘ don’t you see he is *out of spirits this morning* ? ’ ”

“ This sally produced a general laugh, notwithstanding the seriousness of the occasion ; for Pat, you know, can’t resist a joke, even when the rope is about his neck. The knight looked like thunder, and his old crony, Colonel Cavanagh, turning to Bateman, exclaimed, ‘ Well, Beau, I will do you the justice to say, that you are as ready with your pun or your pistol, as any man that ever stepped on the Curragh of Kildare ! ’ ”

“ ‘ They are alike offensive weapons in his hand, ’ rejoined Kilgobbin ; ‘ and he makes his friends his mark for both. ’ ”

“ ‘ Only when they think proper to become my

enemies ;' said Bateman, bowing significantly to the knight.

“ This preliminary skirmish of words was now put an end to, by the seconds delivering to each his pistol, and desiring him to take his ground. The breathless attention and eager curiosity of the spectators was now so intense, that it was with difficulty they could be kept from closing in on both sides, and endangering their lives. The proper space, however, being at length cleared, the combatants appeared in their stations. Bateman's position was absolutely a picture ; easy, erect, graceful, and unembarrassed ; the vitals well guarded, without any studied solicitude. Anatomically considered, there were not six inches of the body exposed to mortal injury. He wore his hat, and his dress seemed as if he had just left his toilette.

“ Kilgobbin was still without his coat, and his head uncovered ; his whole appearance slovenly ; his manner eager and angry, with a good guard however, and bending somewhat forward on his right knee, as if stretching to reach as near as possible to his opponent.

“ As challenger, the knight was to have the first shot ; the signal was given, and he fired without effect. Bateman now received the word, and instantly discharged his pistol, the ball striking the ground at his antagonist’s feet. The seconds now delivered another pistol to each, the groupes around hardly breathing, so absorbed in the interest of the scene.

“ Again the word was given, and, at the same moment, Bateman’s second cried out to the knight, ‘ Stop, sir, you have advanced a pace on your ground.’ Kilgobbin, in drawing back, said, ‘ I beg pardon, I was not aware of it.’ Somebody amongst the spectators cried out, ‘ Keep your ground, knight;’ upon which he immediately said, ‘ I am willing to waive my shot, to atone for my irregularity.’

“ ‘ By no means,’ answered Bateman ; ‘ but if Kilgobbin wishes to shorten the distance, let him advance, I have no objection.’

“ ‘ No, no,’ exclaimed the seconds, ‘ keep your ground, gentlemen.’ The signal was now repeated, the knight fired, and his ball took off one of the breast-buttons of Bateman’s coat.

“ ‘That was well intended, Kilgobbin,’ said Bateman, ‘and in your best style.’

“ ‘No,’ said the former, ‘my hand is out, and I have not my own pistols.’

“ Bateman then fired in his turn, his ball passing through the sleeve of Kilgobbin’s shirt without touching his arm.

“ ‘Come, that’s not bad,’ said the knight.

“ Some confusion seemed here to arise amongst the crowd, and a horseman appearing at a distance, galloping towards the ground, a cry was heard that the high sheriff of the county was coming.

“ ‘By Jupiter!’ exclaimed his brother, who was present, “ ‘that is impossible, for I left him in his bed yesterday, having been wounded himself in a duel, the day before, with the clerk of the peace.’ It was now discovered that the horseman was Kilgobbin’s groom, with his master’s favourite pistols, which had been sent for to a considerable distance, and had not arrived in time. The knight seemed much pleased to get them, and requested to have them loaded instead of those he had used.

“ Bateman’s second objected to any change of pistols, unless his principal were allowed to take his choice of one of them.

“ Kilgobbin agreed to this, but Bateman refused, saying, gaily, he was too good a carpenter to find fault with his tools. They now resumed their stations, and the knight having received one of his favourite weapons, was called on to fire, which he did, with more deliberation and effect than before. Bateman was seen to stagger back a few paces, and drop on one knee, his pistol, in the effort to recover himself, fell from his hand, and exploded, but without doing any mischief. He was, however, immediately on his ground again, declaring he was but slightly hurt, and calling for another pistol.

“ The seconds now interfered, asserting that enough had been done to satisfy the honour of both parties ; and the spectators eagerly joined in their opinion, crying out, ‘ No more, no more, gentlemen !’

“ Kilgobbin, observing the general sentiment, said, ‘ He had no objection *now* to accept a proper apology !’

“ ‘What do you say, Mr. Bateman?’ asked young French, who seemed particularly anxious to put an end to the affair.

“ ‘I say, sir,’ steadily replied Bateman, ‘that I am not a man to make an apology at the muzzle of a pistol on any occasion; but, in the present instance, to offer an apology would be to sanction intemperance, and acknowledge an accident to be an offence. I am here to satisfy the Knight of Kilgobbin, but not to humour him.’

“ ‘Several voices here exclaimed, ‘Bravo, Bateman!’ The seconds consulted together for a moment, and French turning to him again, said, ‘Will you, Mr. Bateman, in the presence of this assembly, declare the blow to have been accidental?’

“ ‘Not while I have a leg to stand on,’ answered he, with great vehemence; ‘I disdain to repeat an assertion which has been once doubted. By the expression of that doubt, I am properly the offended person, and alone have the right to demand an apology.’

“ ‘The case now seemed hopeless, as neither party would give way. Considerable confusion and much altercation arose; some persons crying out

to the seconds to quit the ground ; others calling on them to do their duty, and let the combatants proceed. The general feeling, however, was evidently against Kilgobbin. Joe Blake, General Bingham, and other members of the Jockey Club, declared that he pushed the matter too far. Lyon Lynch, of Lynchestown, roundly accused the seconds of not understanding their duty ; warm words passed between him and Andrew French, who said, ' That as he could not please the gentleman in his character of second, he would try if he could not give him satisfaction as principal.' Here Bateman, in his humorous, laughing way, interposed, stopping Lynch's rejoinder, with ' Come, come, gentlemen, order, order ! if you please. This is no place for quarrelling, and it is very hard that Kilgobbin and I can't be allowed to fight it out in peace.'

" At this moment, up comes the King of the Curragh, as he was called, old Sir Toby Tuite, whose word, for half a century, was considered in that part of the country, as the law and the gospel in all matters of duelling, horse-racing, and cock-

fighting. As he was acquainted with the case, the seconds appealed to him, and a general silence took place immediately, to hear the veteran's decision, which he delivered with great solemnity.

“ ‘Gentlemen,’ said he, ‘a blow is the greatest indignity which can be put upon a man of honour and feeling. My friend, Kilgobbin, has received one in public, under circumstances which might reasonably make a man of high spirit very reluctant to admit the excuse of accident, even when he had himself no doubt on the subject. We must not allow our personal dignity to be tainted by even a conjectural violation.’ (‘Hear him, hear him!’ said the knight.) ‘Kilgobbin is justified, therefore, in the course which he has adopted. As blood has been drawn in the field, he is also at liberty to receive an apology, if he chooses so to do; but as an apology has been refused by my friend Bateman, Kilgobbin is authorised by the strict law of honour to proceed.’

“ ‘Who ever questioned it?’ interposed Kilgobbin; polishing, with his shirt sleeve, the barrel of his pistol.

“‘ I say, gentlemen, he has a right to proceed as long as his antagonist stands before him—until one or the other is disabled.’

“‘ A second Daniel!’ exclaimed the knight exultingly; ‘ a second Daniel!’

“‘ Yes, gentleman,’ continued Sir Toby, ‘ though the offence must be considered to have been originally improbable—though it was, in the first instance, disclaimed, and has been here sufficiently atoned for, yet, strictly speaking, Kilgobbin may insist upon proceeding to the last extremity. He has a right to demand the pound of flesh—it is in the bond—but, by the cross of St. Patrick!’ continued the old man, raising his clenched hand ‘ he is a Jew, if in this case he exacts it.’

“ I here could not resist crying out, in my turn, ‘ A second Daniel! a second Daniel!’ and the words were loudly echoed on all sides. The knight, disappointed and provoked by the unexpected winding up of the decree, now angrily remonstrated with his second—protested against all further interference or delay, and declared, with great vehemence, ‘ that no power on earth should move him from the ground, until he either was stretched upon it, or had received an apology.’

“The unfavourable feeling towards Kilgobbin, which, from the moment when he dipped his arm into the pond, seemed to prevail among the spectators, became now more evident, and a voice from amongst them, cried out, ‘Well said, Shylock.’ Kilgobbin, exasperated to the last degree, immediately turned round, and cocking his pistol, exclaimed, ‘By him that made me! I’ll blow out the brains of any man who dares to utter that word.’ The word ‘Shylock’ was instantly repeated in a roar of at least fifty voices, on the side from which it had first proceeded. The case was helpless; there was no attacking a host. Kilgobbin was speechless with rage and mortification. Garret Byrne, of Spring Grove, who was standing near me, said, ‘Hang it, this is too bad;’ and addressing the groupe with much warmth, observed, ‘Gentlemen, this is very irregular—all parties agree that the Knight of Kilgobbin has a right to proceed, if he thinks proper, and I, for one, will stand by him in the assertion of that right. Fair play and no favour is my maxim.’

“‘Very proper,’ was now echoed on all sides. ‘Fair play and no favour—proceed, proceed.’

“The seconds, though honourably anxious to

prevent farther mischief, yet uneasy under a responsibility unsustained by any acknowledged or established authority, and conceiving that the obstinacy of the parties left them no alternative, resolved that the affair should now proceed. The space was therefore again cleared, and, in the midst of much agitation and increased interest in those around, the parties once more took their ground. As Bateman approached his station, he looked so pale, and appeared to walk with so much difficulty, that I anxiously ran up to him, expressing my fears that he was seriously hurt. 'A mere scratch, my dear boy,' said he; 'take no notice.' He had tied a handkerchief round his thigh, and I saw the blood trickling down into his boot.

"All was now hushed once more—the pistols were delivered, and the seconds were about to give the word to Kilgobbin, when he observed,— 'You forget, gentlemen, that my antagonist has not returned my last shot. I am bound to receive his fire.'

"'No, sir,' replied Bateman, 'it is your turn to fire; my pistol was discharged;'
'adding, in his

jocular manner, 'that an accidental shot was as good as an accidental blow.'

" 'Why, Bateman,' said French, ready to take hold of any thing that promised peace, 'that is a direct admission.'

" 'Oh, no,' rejoined the former, 'only a joke.'

" It was agreed, that as the pistol was not in Bateman's hand when it exploded, he should be considered as having his turn in reserve, and must therefore first proceed to deliver his fire.

" While the seconds retired to their posts, Kilgobbin, who felt his confidence in his own powers restored, by getting his favourite pistols, cried out, 'Now, Bateman, mind what you are about—I have got my own tools, and by G—d! I'll bring you down the next shot.'

" Bateman, bowing slightly, replied, 'I thank you, sir, for the warning.'

" The word was then given. Bateman fired and his antagonist dropped as if he had been struck by a thunderbolt.

" Bateman exclaimed, 'Good God! I have killed him.'

" We all ran up to Kilgobbin—his second raised

him a little from the ground—he opened his eyes, looked round him, and seeing his adversary near him, faintly said, ‘Give me your hand, Bateman—you are not to blame for this—God bless you!’—he never spoke again.

“He had been hit under the right breast, and the ball lodged in the spine.

“Poor Bateman, dreadfully shocked, fell to the earth, through weakness from loss of blood, and was obliged to be carried off the ground. He was afterwards tried and honourably acquitted.”

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN a man is about to fight a duel, it may be questioned whether it operates as a stimulus to his valour to be told, that a party has just been shot through the body in an affair at Chalk Farm, or Wimbledon Common. Even if he be, in the words of Junius, "as brave as a total absence of all feeling and reflection can make him," it is probable, that a person so circumstanced, will occasionally think of "a bullet in the thorax, or a sword in the small guts;" and, perhaps, if he were to acknowledge the truth, he might confess, that Falstaff's feelings, although indecorous, were not unnatural, when he exclaimed—

"There lies honour for you."

However this may be, and whatever reflections

the affair so circumstantially related by O'Hara, in the last chapter, might have excited in the mind of our hero, there was "no outward or visible sign" by which to judge of their effect. Although he evidently took much interest in the narration, his attention seemed to be wholly uninfluenced by any reference to himself, or to the transaction in which he was about to engage.

From the nature of the case, its result might be expected to be quite as serious as that which had been just described; but the passions of D'Arcy were too violent, his provocations too recent, and his desire of revenge too ardent, to be checked by any considerations of personal hazard. After undergoing a drill, therefore, in which his friend took some pains to convince him, that a good position in the field was as important to the duellist as to the general, our hero and O'Hara set forward to the Royal Square, in the barrack, a servant following with a case of pistols, to be ready for immediate action, if required.

D'Arcy, having given up his commission, considered himself no longer a soldier, and was therefore out of uniform. O'Hara was dressed

in full regimentals, as Lieutenant-Colonel of the Volunteers. The latter, indeed, appeared to enter upon this expedition with an alacrity, the cause of which, it may not be unnecessary to explain.

About a year before the present period, a circumstance had occurred which brought the corps he commanded, in contact with the regiment of Colonel Shervington, in a way which might have led to very serious consequences, if great prudence and temperance had not been manifested by persons high in authority.

During the war with America, which then raged, the military resources of Great Britain were so much exhausted by the disasters of the contest, that the forces destined for domestic purposes, were wholly inadequate to the duties required of them; and Ireland, though threatened with invasion from abroad, and torn by dissensions within, was left, with all her dangers and discontents, to protect herself.

At this moment of embarrassment, when the attempt to tyrannise over our colonies recoiled upon ourselves, and created a democracy where

we intended a despotism—when, discomfited, disheartened, and disgraced, we beheld all Europe either openly in arms, or covertly in alliance against us—when the combined fleets of France, Spain, and Holland, rode unmolested through the channel—and the palsied powers of the state seemed scarcely capable of self-defence; at such a moment—when rebellion could not have been successfully resisted, and the wrongs of centuries might have been effectually avenged—what was the conduct of Ireland? of Catholic Ireland! With a spirit and alacrity unexampled, all ranks forgetting their injuries, and suspending their disputes, rushed forward in support of the empire: they created a national army for national defence, and with a fidelity so generous as to be almost romantic, remained loyal to a government and a people, whose policy towards Ireland (according to the words of Mr. Pitt), “had been for the last three hundred years, equally unwise, impolitic, and unjust.”

The Papists were then found as hearty as the Protestants, and far more hearty than the Presbyterians, in the cause of Great Britain. They set

up neither a republic nor a pretender; there were no popish plots—no jesuitical machinations to undermine our Protestant constitution in church and state. The evils of divided allegiance were then inoperative and unknown—reserved as a convenient bug-bear for modern bigotry, and left to flourish in the rhetorical rhodomontade of canting hypocrisy, and political imposture.

Never was there an army more national, more patriotic, more popular! The spirit of a people, at all times prone to military enterprise, was aroused to an enthusiasm which disregarded the considerations of sex or age. Women and children partook of the general ardour, and were arrayed in the uniform of the respective corps in which their husbands and fathers had enrolled themselves, for the defence of their country.

The governing party, at first beheld with some alarm, and admitted with great reluctance, the necessity of placing arms in the hands of the Catholics. Some corps were embodied on the principle of excluding that obnoxious race; but this illiberal policy soon gave way, under the apprehensions which the imminent danger of

the crisis excited, and it was thought prudent to allow them at least one privilege—that of defending their country.

As the constitution of this national force was at that time strictly popular, the whole having been raised, armed, and commissioned, without any interference or authority of the government, it may be supposed, that little connection or sympathy existed between the volunteers and the small body of regular troops then stationed in Ireland.

Professional persons seldom look with much favour upon the amateur tribe, who take up, as an amusement, what the others pursue as an occupation. The arrogance which a conscious possession of science creates on the one side, and the vanity which characterizes the pretension to it on the other, co-operate to produce in both, a feeling of dislike, if not of absolute hostility. The army, I believe, are commonly supposed to be at least as sensitive on this point as any other body of men; and the militia, train bands, fencibles, and volunteers, are alike, though not

perhaps in the same degree, objects of some ridicule and disfavour amongst his Majesty's regular forces.

The volunteers of Ireland, at this time, were certainly not considered "*depositories of panic*;" since, to their protection, at a very alarming period, was entrusted the most exposed and not the least important part of the empire. The sarcasms of a late eminent statesman, upon this description of force, were, indeed, more characterized by wit than wisdom. Raw levies and an undisciplined rabble, as patriot bands are generally called by the admirers of standing armies, have often given a lesson to regular troops; and never had the professional soldier more reason to doubt his superiority over the armed citizen, than in the unhappy contest which subsisted at the period here alluded to.

History, indeed, has often proved what has been so strikingly illustrated in the American and French Revolutions,—that there is something better than discipline—more to be depended upon than tactics; and that patriotism, even with

a pike, may disconcert the most rigid disciplinarian, with Dundas's forty-five manœuvres at his fingers ends.

But the soldier, like every other professional man, will naturally be influenced by the pride of his art, and feel disposed to undervalue those who attempt to perform his functions, without having passed through the same process of education as himself, or acquired that martial air and mechanical dexterity, which are so impressive on parade.

The volunteers of Ireland, therefore, though at that juncture as important a body of men, in the estimation of the government, as in their own, were viewed with considerable jealousy by the king's troops; and some occasional manifestations of this feeling, had rendered both parties a little touchy and tenacious. Every thing, however, which prudence could dictate, was done on the part of the public authorities, to prevent such a collision of interests or duties, as might give occasion for offence; and the military were particularly impressed with the necessity of observing a discreet and respectful deportment towards a

body of men whose services were, at the moment, so essential to the state.

In despite of every precaution, however, the indiscretion of individuals frequently endangered the public tranquillity; and the following circumstance, amongst many, will sufficiently indicate the spirit which prevailed, and the delicate management which it required.

The corps of volunteers, commanded by Col. O'Hara, having appointed a field-day in the Phoenix Park, assembled to the amount of seven or eight hundred men; and, in their march to the ground, met, in Parliament Street, a detachment of Col. Shervington's regiment, on their way to relieve the castle guard; they were luckily on different sides of the street. O'Hara, with that spirit of gallantry and politeness which invariably characterizes the gentleman, and which should always distinguish the soldier, as a mark of respect to the king's troops, ordered his men to carry arms as they passed, and the officers of the corps saluted with their swords.

Whether taken by surprise, or doubtful how far an interchange of civility with men who were in

arms only as defenders of their country, might be consistent with military etiquette, or the dignity of those who are peculiarly denominated his Majesty's forces, it is difficult to say; but the relief guard, uninfluenced by the courtesy of O'Hara and his corps, proceeded on their route, without taking notice of the respect which had been paid to them.

The feelings of men of honour and spirit, under a slight of this nature, which appeared at once as impolitic as impolite, may be easily imagined. On the return of the corps from the park, a meeting of the officers was held, to consider in what manner they could, most consistently with their duty to their country, express their sense of the insult which they had received. The result was, that the officers of the regiment should be held responsible, as gentlemen, for a conduct which seemed more particularly attributable to them; and, accordingly, a cartel, demanding immediate satisfaction, was forwarded to each of them, from the individuals of corresponding rank in the corps.

Such a general challenge, it may be supposed, excited no small surprise and embarrassment.

The sensitive spirit of the soldier rendered it a matter of some delicacy for the individuals thus called upon, to hesitate, where the honour of the regiment appeared to be involved, even by an injudicious proceeding; and, on the other hand, the possible consequences of complying with such a requisition, in exciting a hostile feeling between the volunteers and the army, at such a moment, was a consideration too alarming to the security of the country, to allow the parties concerned, to consult their own feelings, or proceed to extremities, if they could by any possibility be prevented. A communication of the affair was, therefore, made to the higher authorities; and the interference of influential persons on both sides was employed, to allay, by temperate and judicious explanation, the angry feelings which had been called forth, and which might have led to the most disastrous consequences.

But, however O'Hara had been induced to sacrifice his private feelings on the occasion, to considerations of public advantage, he never alluded to the circumstance but with some expression of indignation; and there seemed to exist

in his mind a kind of lurking dissatisfaction with himself, for not having exacted, in some way or other, a public atonement for the offence which had been received by the corps under his command.

On more than one occasion, he appeared to contemplate, with some gratification, the prospect of coming into personal collision with Colonel Shervington or some of his officers; but as no consideration could ever prompt O'Hara to depart from the deportment of a gentleman, and as the other parties were strongly impressed with the necessity of caution and politeness, in their demeanour towards the volunteers, nothing had occurred, which, even by the most punctilious interpretation, could be brought within the operation of any rule or precedent laid down in the "Institutes of Honour;" and although a hostile spirit existed between the parties, there appeared to be no legitimate cause of war.

Under these circumstances, therefore, D'Arcy's quarrel with Colonel Shervington was considered by O'Hara, as quite a lucky occurrence. He took part in it with the greatest alacrity, flattering

himself, no doubt, that, out of the many cases which he had laid down, wherein the second was converted into a principal, some one might arise, in which he would be justified in bringing the colonel to account, on grounds that would not commit the military with the volunteers, or violate those conditions of peace, to which he had, through some paramount influence, so reluctantly assented.

In accompanying D'Arcy as his friend, he entered into all his feelings, with even more zeal than usually distinguished him on such occasions; he adopted all his resentments, and longed for nothing so much as a fair opportunity to supersede the claims of his principal, and make the quarrel his own.

At the parade of the regiment, they found Colonel Shervington surrounded by his officers.

The situation of the noble barrack of Dublin is too remote from the fashionable part of that city, to be visited, on ordinary occasions, by persons of any distinction, unconnected with the army. Besides the usual spectators of the com-

mon class, however, there were a few private gentlemen mingled amongst the military groupe, in conversation with their friends.

The appearance of a volunteer officer in the barrack, in full uniform, at this period, always excited a peculiar interest. The regular soldier regarded him as a kind of interloper, assuming a character and consequence to which he had no legitimate claim ; and, in the present instance, the martial air, manly figure, and lofty deportment of O'Hara, were calculated to attract a more than ordinary share of attention.

His person was not unknown to Colonel Sherington, though he did not think it proper to recognise him on this occasion. When D'Arcy and his friend had approached the spot where the colonel stood, that officer, observing D'Arcy out of uniform, addressed him, in an angry and authoritative tone, demanding,—“ Why he presumed to absent himself from his duty without leave, and appear upon parade, in plain clothes ?” The irritated manner of the commander immediately drew the attention of all around, when D'Arcy, in an emphatic tone, replied : “ Colonel Sher-

vington, I am happy to say, I am no longer subject to your control, or obliged to submit to your insults."

The colonel, with great agitation, interrupting him, said,—“What do you mean, sir, by this daring breach of discipline? I will instantly order you under arrest.” Beckoning to a serjeant to advance.

“Sir,” said D’Arcy, “I disclaim your authority; I have come here to tell you, in the face of your regiment, that your conduct towards me, has been tyrannical and oppressive—unworthy the character of an officer and a gentleman, and such as compels me to demand immediate satisfaction.”

Such a mode of address, in the presence of all his officers, and from one whom he considered as a subaltern of his regiment, confounded the proud and overbearing spirit of Shervington. He was astonished at what appeared to him so desperate a departure from the rules of military subordination, and, speechless with rage, he mechanically clapped his hand on his sword. O’Hara, observing the action, immediately stepped

forward, and said,—“ My friend, Colonel Shervington, is, as you see, unarmed, but if you are disposed for a little sword exercise this morning, to amuse these gentlemen, I am,” drawing his sword, and putting himself in a posture of defence, “ entirely at your service.”

A proceeding so extraordinary, added to the air and character of the man, who was known to several of the persons present, excited, as may be imagined, no small interest. Several of the officers interposed between him and the colonel, who, though confessedly a brave man, seemed by no means prompt to accept his invitation. Some of the more zealous proposed to disarm O’Hara ; but Shervington had the prudence instantly to repress any attempt of that kind. Calling a serjeant of the guard, he ordered D’Arcy under an arrest, to be conveyed to his quarters, declaring he would make an example of him, for the benefit of the service.

D’Arcy angrily retorted, that he was no longer subject to military law—refused to submit unless compelled by violence, and warned them to proceed at their peril. The colonel, however, would

listen to no remonstrance ; and repeated his orders to take him by force, if necessary, to the guard-room of the regiment.

“ Mr. D’Arcy,” said O’Hara, “as Colonel Shervington thinks proper to evade your challenge, in this unhandsome manner, you have for the present, no alternative but to submit to military violence, satisfied that you will have ample redress for this outrage. In the mean time, your rights devolve on me.” Major Creighton also expostulating with D’Arcy, who was always a favourite with him, the latter allowed himself to be conducted from the parade, under arrest, though agitated by feelings of disappointment and exasperation, that prompted him to a resistance which would have been ineffectual and absurd.

Colonel Shervington was evidently much provoked and disconcerted by this occurrence. To be called to account thus publicly, by one of his own officers, in the presence of all those over whom he was accustomed to exercise a despotic sway, was galling to his pride ; and a lively recollection of his former *demêlé* with O’Hara, together with the necessity which had been im-

pressed upon him, of a conciliatory and respectful demeanour towards the volunteers, made him particularly anxious to avoid committing himself with a person of O'Hara's peculiar turn.

Though personally brave, as well as arrogant and overbearing, the embarrassment of Shervington was, therefore, not a little increased, when O'Hara, turning to him after D'Arcy had left the parade, observed with a solemn air :—

“Colonel Shervington, as a soldier, and a gentleman, you are doubtless prepared to answer to me, as Mr. D'Arcy's friend, for the unaccountable treatment to which you have subjected him ; and you cannot be surprised, if in a case like this, where matters are so public, I require immediate satisfaction. My servant is in attendance with pistols, the park is close at hand, and I shall await your leisure.”

“Sir,” replied Shervington, with much coolness and self-possession, “as a commanding officer in his Majesty's service, I do not hold myself responsible to you, or any man, for the manner in which I exercise the duties of that station.”

“Sir,” rejoined O’Hara, “I am also a commanding officer, in the service of my country—a service which I take to be not less honourable than that of which you boast. To plead professional privilege, as a protection for offence, would, I conceive, be rather an awkward expedient for either character to adopt; you cannot, of course, mean to resort to such a one with me.”

“Your conduct and language, sir,” said Shervington, “are extraordinary. Your name, I believe is—”

“O’Hara, at your service,” replied the latter, with an expressive bow. “Those who respect the uniform I wear, call me *Colonel* O’Hara; I was vain enough to suppose, I was not altogether unknown to you by that designation; but I shall endeavour to impress it more strongly on your recollection in the present instance.”

“Upon what ground, then, Mr. O’Hara,” haughtily rejoined Colonel Shervington, “do you presume to interfere in this way between me and my officers?”

O’Hara, observing the marked manner in which

the colonel avoided giving him his military title, replied, with an expressive smile,—

“Lest my claim upon you, sir, should not be strong enough on my friend’s account, you are pleased, I perceive, to afford me sufficient grounds of quarrel on my own.”

Here, Major Creighton, interposing, remarked, that “the parade was no place for a contention of this nature.”

“It is for that reason,” retorted O’Hara, “that I require an immediate adjournment to a place more appropriate; and give me leave to observe to you, sir, at the same time, that when I have dispatched my affair with your colonel, I shall be at the service of any of his officers, who may be disposed to interfere in my proceedings.”

“I can no longer suffer this interruption to the business of the parade,” warmly observed the colonel.

“You can at once put an end to it,” rejoined O’Hara, “by signifying your assent to my proposition. I have already declared I should await your leisure.”

Shervington, with all his caution, now found that there was no honourable means of avoiding the contest, to which O'Hara so pertinaciously invited him ; and wishing at least, by postponing it to the following morning, to procure time for deliberation, in a matter which, he had reason to believe, would be thought of some importance by his superiors, he emphatically replied,—

“ Sir, if you conceive you have any claim on me, I refer you to my friend, Major Creighton, who will communicate with any person whom you may appoint, and remain at home this evening for that purpose.”

“ I am sorry, and indeed surprised, Colonel Shervington,” said O'Hara, “ to be obliged to observe, that in these affairs, delays are dangerous ; I trust, however,” looking significantly on those around him, “ that no obstruction will grow out of a postponement, which I cannot but consider very unnecessary, if not extraordinary. Upon my honour, Colonel Shervington,” continued he, with a peculiar expression of the eye, which that officer well understood, “ I shall con-

sider myself very unlucky, if I am again frustrated in my hopes of bringing matters to a proper termination between us."

To this observation, Shervington replied only by a slight bow, and O'Hara retired from the parade, declaring he was sorry to be obliged to resort to the civil power, to procure the discharge of his friend, from the illegal restraint which military violence had imposed upon him.

CHAPTER XVII.

D'ARCY had not anticipated the measure adopted by Colonel Shervington ; and he was both mortified and disappointed, by the result of a proceeding which he had flattered himself would amply gratify his resentment. When, therefore, he found himself placed under arrest, in his late apartment in the barrack, with the prospect of being eventually foiled in his efforts to exact a proper reparation from Shervington, he raged like a chafed lion.

He knew, however, that he could not be long detained by mere military authority ; and was only apprehensive lest his friend, O'Hara, under the influence of his peculiar notions, should find out that it was his duty, according to the " In-

stitutes of Honour," to take up the quarrel of his principal, and call Shervington to immediate account, before the former could interfere to prevent it, and follow up his own claim.

While indulging in these feelings, and meditating new projects of vengeance, D'Arcy, in the course of the morning, received a visit from Major Creighton, with whom he had always been on good terms. Creighton was a plain, blunt, honest Englishman, who had seen service, and was rather out of place amongst the dandies of his regiment.

A soldier of fortune, he had, at an early age, obtained a pair of colours, and entered upon his military career, with an enthusiasm which anticipated the triumphs of a Turenne or a Marlborough. But a few campaigns soon cooled his ardour, and convinced him, that heroism, unless exhibited in a high place, makes but little figure in a gazette extraordinary; and that merit, without money or interest, is apt to be stationary in the army list.

He persevered, however, and having reaped all

the glory that, in the British service, usually falls to the sickle of a subaltern, he found himself, after thirty years' hard duty under the rigours of the north, and the fervours of the south, with more scars than honours—promoted, by great good fortune, to the rank of captain, unattached; and at full liberty to enjoy that "*otium cum dignitate*," which is provided by a grateful people for the defenders of their country.

Disappointed and disgusted, he was about to retire to all the pleasures of repining, and the penury of half-pay, when, by a small legacy from a relation, and a loan from Colonel Shervington, who (according to the system at that time pursued in the army) had been commissioned, in the cradle, the very year in which Creighton fought his first campaign, he was enabled to purchase a majority in his friend's regiment.

In assisting him to obtain this promotion, Shervington was less influenced by generosity, than by a desire to avail himself of Creighton's military experience, in the management of a corps, to the command of which the former had

been raised, without having ever "set a squadron in the field," or known more of "the order of a battle" than Cassio himself.

Creighton, who was little pleased with his brother officers, soon perceived that D'Arcy, with all his faults, had, at least, the spirit of a soldier. On many occasions, the honest major evinced a disposition to conduct himself, towards the young Hibernian, with a greater degree of liberality than seemed to actuate the proceedings of his commander; but his obligations, of a pecuniary nature, to the latter, operated as a check on his better feelings, and prevented that independent manifestation of his sentiments, which might have rescued D'Arcy from much petty persecution, and even produced a salutary effect on the general character of the regiment.

Although he much disapproved of Shervington's general deportment towards D'Arcy, yet his ideas of military subordination, led him to view the conduct of the latter, on parade, as unwarrantable and outrageous.

For the colonel of a regiment to descend to a personal conflict with one of his subalterns, was,

in his opinion, quite out of the question. But he apprehended the worst consequences from the violence of a spirit which prompted so intemperate a proceeding as that which he had witnessed; and although D'Arcy, by throwing up his commission, had relieved himself from the terrors of a courtmartial, the major considered, that in a contention with his superior officer, his young friend would, under any circumstances, be the victim; and he was anxious, by his good offices, to prevent, if possible, such a result.

He, therefore, earnestly represented to D'Arcy, the imprudence of which he had been guilty, and the consequences to his future prospects, which must necessarily follow from such an example of mutinous insubordination. He contended that the colonel, consistently with the respect which he owed to the service, could not consent to meet D'Arcy, or allow himself to be held personally responsible to him, for the manner in which he exercised his command;—that any attempt, on the part of D'Arcy, to force a meeting, would only have the effect of placing him in unpleasant circumstances, and might,

perhaps, excite the public feeling in a way which would not be prudent at the moment, and could not but be disagreeable to the government, with which D'Arcy's friends were, he knew, closely connected. Finally, he urged, that as the regiment was to change quarters in a few days, and D'Arcy was to be no longer connected with it, the absence of the colonel would remove all ground of irritation, or opportunity of offence; and he thought, under these circumstances, he could induce Shervington to take no farther notice of what had passed.

D'Arcy was in a temper of mind which left him little disposed to attend to these remonstrances, though he listened to them with respect, and duly acknowledged the motive by which they were dictated. The very hint of any thing like a concession on his part, increased his exasperation; and he declared, in a form of speech which was rather more energetic than refined, that he would follow the regiment wherever it went, and horse-whip the colonel at its head, if he could obtain no other means of chastising him.

The major warmly censured D'Arcy's intem-

perance, and was so far offended by the unmeasured terms in which his friend and commander was spoken of, that there is no saying how the interview might have terminated, if it had not been interrupted by the entrance of a sergeant, who announced to the major, the colonel's order for D'Arcy's immediate liberation.

When Shervington's anger and mortification at the scene on the parade had so far subsided, as to allow of his entering into a calm consideration of the case, he reflected, that D'Arcy, having resigned his commission, was no longer subject to military authority; and as he knew that a brief process of law, in the shape of a "habeas corpus," would speedily reclaim the liberty of the subject, and, perhaps, lead to the infliction of a penalty for its infringement, he determined to anticipate such a proceeding, by at once relieving the prisoner from the arrest under which he had placed him.

The honest major, pleased at D'Arcy's enlargement, cordially shook hands with him on his departure from the barracks; but once more earnestly remonstrated against all farther violence

in an affair "so inconsistent with military propriety, and the rules of the service."

In his zeal for his young friend, O'Hara had suffered no time to be lost. On quitting the parade in the morning, he immediately repaired to counsel learned in the law, by whose assistance he proposed, with all possible expedition, to sue out the legal document above alluded to ; but the unexpected liberation of D'Arcy superseded the necessity of such a proceeding, and left the two friends to concert together new measures of hostility against Colonel Shervington.

It was with no small difficulty that O'Hara could be prevailed upon to yield to D'Arcy the prior right of proceeding. He contended, that as Shervington had virtually refused to meet his principal, according to the fifth case, in the tenth chapter of the "Institutes of Honour," he, O'Hara, as second, was bound, not only to take up the quarrel of his friend, but also, to resent the insult offered to himself, in so disrespectfully dealing with a case in which he was officially concerned.

D'Arcy, however, was determined to bring the

matter to an immediate issue. He provided himself, therefore, with an instrument calculated to inflict a very degrading castigation ; and, without intimating his intention to O'Hara, whose high sentiments of honour led him to regard all attempts at personal violence as degrading to the character of a gentleman, he asked the major to accompany him in a direction where, from his acquaintance with Shervington's habits, D'Arcy knew he was likely to meet him.

They had not proceeded far, when turning from Essex Bridge, upon Arran Quay, they encountered the colonel and Major Creighton, approaching arm in arm.

The peculiar feelings which operated on all the parties, occasioned something like an involuntary start ; and, in the minds of three of them, an undefined anticipation of what might now ensue.

D'Arcy, disengaging himself from his friend, darted forward towards Shervington, who drew back a little as the other advanced.

" You are a scoundrel and a coward ! and thus I chastise you," exclaimed the former, raising his

whip at the same time, about to suit the action to the word.

O'Hara, however, observing his intention, seized his friend's arm in sufficient time to rescue the colonel from the disgrace of a blow; and remonstrated with D'Arcy against so violent a proceeding.

The latter, obstructed in his design, by the powerful opposition of O'Hara, was obliged to content himself with repeating the epithets he had before used, and shaking his whip at his adversary; a species of insult to a man of honour, hardly to be aggravated by any bodily sufferance, which might result from the tangible application of such an instrument. In the exasperation of the moment, Shervington, who was in uniform, had drawn his sword, and might have severely avenged himself on D'Arcy, if Major Creighton had not interfered to prevent him.

An occurrence of this nature, in open day, and in so public a place, immediately, as may be supposed, attracted a crowd; and the parties, who began to be sensible of the awkwardness of performing such a scene before so many spec-

tators, and who intended to refer proceedings to a more appropriate opportunity, were about to withdraw from observation, when they found themselves under arrest, and in custody of several peace-officers.

This event had been brought about, through the intervention of some of Colonel Shervington's friends, who had witnessed the transaction of the morning. Aware of D'Arcy's violent spirit, when they found measures adopted to free him from arrest, they determined, by an immediate application to the magistrates, to prevent the consequences which would otherwise inevitably ensue; and which, by involving the colonel with O'Hara, might again commit the regiment with the corps of volunteers under his command.

Warrants of arrest were, therefore, issued against all the parties; and the peace-officers traced the steps of the two friends so quickly, as to terminate the rencontre in the unexpected manner which has just been stated.

D'Arcy's first impulse was to extricate himself by resistance or flight; and for either purpose, he knew he could depend upon finding allies among

the crowd. The generous warmth of an Irishman always prompts him to take part with the oppressed: and *primâ facie*, he considers every man oppressed, whom he sees in jeopardy from any process of law, or authority. A moment's reflection, however, soon convinced our hero, that nothing would be gained to his object by such a mode of proceeding, as the arrest of his adversary would be effectual in preventing hostilities, within the limits of legal authority.

He therefore submitted quietly, according to the advice and example of his friend O'Hara, who considered it always unbecoming a gentleman, to enter into personal conflict with the humbler functionaries of the law, against whom, resistance is rarely successful, and from whom, indignity must always be without redress.

Before the magistrate, therefore, they were carried; and in due form bound, under heavy recognizances, to keep the peace towards all his Majesty's liege subjects in the kingdom of Ireland, during the space of two years.

D'Arcy, whose resentment against Shervington, and desire of revenge, seemed to increase with

every obstruction which occurred to their gratification, immediately resolved to cross the channel, and invite his adversary to join him at Holyhead, where they might settle their dispute without fear of interruption. To this arrangement O'Hara readily agreed as consistent with the "Institutes of Honour," and convenient for the adjustment of his own affair with Colonel Shervington, which he was determined to prosecute, and had reluctantly consented to postpone, in favour of D'Arcy's prior claim.

Having sailed, therefore, in the first packet, and arrived at their destination, they caused a communication to be made to Major Creighton, stating, that they would wait a week at Holyhead, in the confident expectation that Colonel Shervington would lose no time in repairing to a rendezvous, so favourable to their common purpose.

On the third day, however, of their impatient sojourn at the Head, they learned from a paragraph, in an Irish newspaper, that the regiment, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Shervington, had marched on their

route to Cork, from which port they were under orders to proceed to join the army at New York.

The following day brought a letter from Major Creighton, confirming this information, and expressing the regret of Colonel Shervington, that the unavoidable attention to his military duties, deprived him of the honour of complying with Colonel O'Hara's summons, and obliged him to postpone, to some more favourable opportunity, that adjustment of their difference which they mutually desired.

This was a termination of the affair, which neither D'Arcy nor O'Hara had anticipated; and the angry passions of the former were the more provoked and mortified by it, from the marked manner in which all mention of him had been studiously omitted, in the major's apologetic communication. O'Hara, also, particularly expressed his disappointment; as, from the double capacity in which he was to act—as second, in the first instance, and principal, in the second, he hoped to derive from the transaction, a highly interesting illustration of the principles laid

down in his great work of the "Institutes of Honour."

Unwilling to return immediately to Dublin, D'Arcy, finding himself so far on his road, determined to divert his chagrin, and gratify his curiosity, by a trip to the great metropolis of the British empire.

The friends, therefore, separated, with many expressions of regard; D'Arcy taking post to London, and O'Hara, returning by the first packet to Ireland, to prosecute his great work, and arrange the new materials, which the pugnacious propensities of his friends, as well as himself, so copiously supplied.

Unluckily, however, the world was not destined to be benefited by the labours of this Puffendorf of private quarrels. Before his voluminous manuscripts were prepared for the press, he became a victim to his own code, and fell by a shot from the pistol of one of his most intimate companions, on a slight offence, for which an apology had been offered, but which, according to the "Institutes of Honour," he could not receive, till a case of pistols had been discharged as a preliminary.

In the giddy vortex of a London life, D'Arcy was whirled about for some time, much more to his satisfaction than to his credit. His father, who easily forgave the sacrifice of his commission, in the *eclat* of the circumstances which attended it, had interest enough to procure him access to what is called good society; and his own passions and propensities made him acquainted with that of a different description, without the ceremony of an introduction. Some Oxford men, also, who had graduated like him, in every form of college dissipation, were delighted to meet again their old associate, and eagerly pressed forward, to initiate him in all the mysteries which characterize the great *alma mater* of the metropolis.

His studies, indeed, in this seminary of sin, embraced the whole course of civic dissipation. There was nothing too high or too low for the ambitious range of his curiosity, or his insatiate ardor of enjoyment. The volatility of his spirits, and the versatility of his taste, fitted him for all pleasures, as well as for all pursuits.

From the refined assemblies of St. James's,

the fashionable intrigues of the Ridotto, and the stately promenades of Ranelagh, he could join in the most riotous orgies of Vauxhall—would lounge the lobbies of the theatres, with the relish of a city rake, and co-operate as loudly in the damnation of a new play, as if he were a dramatic author himself. In short, he was a man of fashion in May Fair—a man of gallantry at Almack's—a man of wit in the clubs—a man of spunk in the taverns—and a man of pleasure everywhere.

He considered it incumbent on him to “see life” in the Tom-and-Jerry sense of that phrase; which means, to become acquainted with the manners and manœuvres of the low and the licentious, through all their vulgar varieties; and he flattered himself he was studying human nature, while observing their profligate pursuits and pleasures. He conceived that knowledge of the world was to be obtained in the plebeian haunts of Bermondsey Spa and Bagnigge Wells, as well as in the fashionable resorts of patrician dissipation—and carried his researches so far, as occasionally to dive amongst the sots of the Cider-

Cellar, and terminate his nocturnal course of experimental profigacy, at the Finish in Covent-Garden.

Through all these irregularities, however, he was impelled by the unreflecting impetuosity of his spirits, rather than by any natural propensity to the vices in which he participated. There was but one species of sensuality to which he could be said to be constitutionally addicted ; and as that one is supposed to be a peculiar characteristic of his countrymen, the unlimited indulgence of which, no moral or religious inculcation had ever taught him either to control or condemn, so, in the pursuits of gallantry, he considered himself as exercising a sort of national privilege, which all whom it might concern, were aware he possessed, and took it for granted, he would use without ceremony or remorse.

A handsome young Irishman, in London, was, according to the common notion amongst his class, a licensed libertine, who might prey at large and "tell them 'twas his charter." He might seduce the wife or daughter of his friend, without any impeachment of his honour, so long

as he was willing to fight the father of the one, or the husband of the other ; and he was encouraged to flatter himself that he had a more than ordinary claim to that impunity, which the injustice of society allows to the unprincipled destroyer of innocence and virtue, while it visits the victim of his treachery with contempt and reprobation.

Amongst women, therefore, he was dissolute from passion, from vanity, and from habit. His other immoralities depended more upon his associates than upon himself. Though always ready for mischief, and delighted with a frolic, he rather acquiesced in what was wrong, than proposed it—he erred more from imitation, than taste. To rule amongst his associates was his great ambition, and the daring spirit which he displayed, generally enabled him to effect that object. His desire was to be foremost on all occasions ; but he was indifferent where the expedition led, provided he had the command of it : and, like many others who appear to govern in matters more important, he often but followed the suggestions of those whom he professed to lead.

Thus, place him amongst revellers, and he

was the most conspicuous for riot and debauch, though not naturally turbulent, nor much addicted to excess; with the votaries of Bacchus, he was a perfect Silenus, though he liked wine only as promoting conviviality, and giving wings to wit; while amongst gamblers, he would play, with a spirit which could be easily excited to a desperate stake, without participating in the fever of the faro-table, or finding any music in the rattle of a dice-box.

In such a course of voluptuous indulgence, he continued for nearly two seasons, to revel amongst the gay, the giddy, and the licentious, of all classes; disturbed only by some sharp expostulations from the old baronet, on the subject of the supplies, and by those occasional embarrassments in which his spirit of gallantry entangled him. He had, however, no qualms of conscience to molest him, as to the wrongs inflicted on the one sex, and his courage was of too reckless a character, to regard the resentment which they might draw down upon him from the other. His chivalrous intrepidity, indeed, sometimes led him to take part in disputes

in which he had himself no direct concern ; and, to do him justice, except when it was called upon to extricate him from the consequences of the *liaisons dangereuses* in which he was too often engaged, his courage was always exercised to his credit, and in the cause of good manners.

His feelings, except when they were perverted by the ruling passion above alluded to, and which

“ Like Aaron’s serpent swallowed up the rest,”

were commonly liberal and generous. His natural disposition could not be considered vicious ; the soil was good, and if it had been judiciously cultivated, it could not have failed to produce a harvest, that would have amply rewarded the husbandry bestowed upon it. But it was neglected ; ’twas

“ An unweeded garden that grew to seed,”

and displayed only a rank luxuriance of noxious vegetation.

Whatever might be said of his morals, his manners were invariably gracious and polite. He

possessed, in an eminent degree, that peculiar tact of society—that prompt alacrity of attention to all the graces of civil intercourse, which characterises his countrymen, and recommends a well educated Irishman to the favour of the fair in all countries.

In an age of chivalry, he would have been the most courteous, though, perhaps, not the most constant of knights ; and would have been the valorous champion of every dulcinea, who, in his ardent devotion to the sex in general, might have dispensed with the homage of his fidelity to one in particular.

With that strange and lamentable inconsistency, which is so often, and so fatally illustrated in what are called the better classes of society, he showed, that the most sensitive delicacy of manners, is not incompatible with the most cruel violation of the morals, which ought to be most respected in civilized life. He would, without hesitation or remorse, inflict the deepest injury on the woman whom he professed to love ; while an insult offered, in his presence, to even the most indifferent stranger of the same sex, or any breach

of good manners, which violated the respect due to the female character, in the ordinary intercourse of life, would excite him to an indignation, which no regard for personal safety could repress.

The Quixotic spirit which prompted him upon all occasions to step forward as the righter of those social wrongs which insolence and ill manners are always ready to perpetrate against the peace and decorum of civil intercourse, will be sufficiently illustrated in the incident which shall be related in the following chapter.

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